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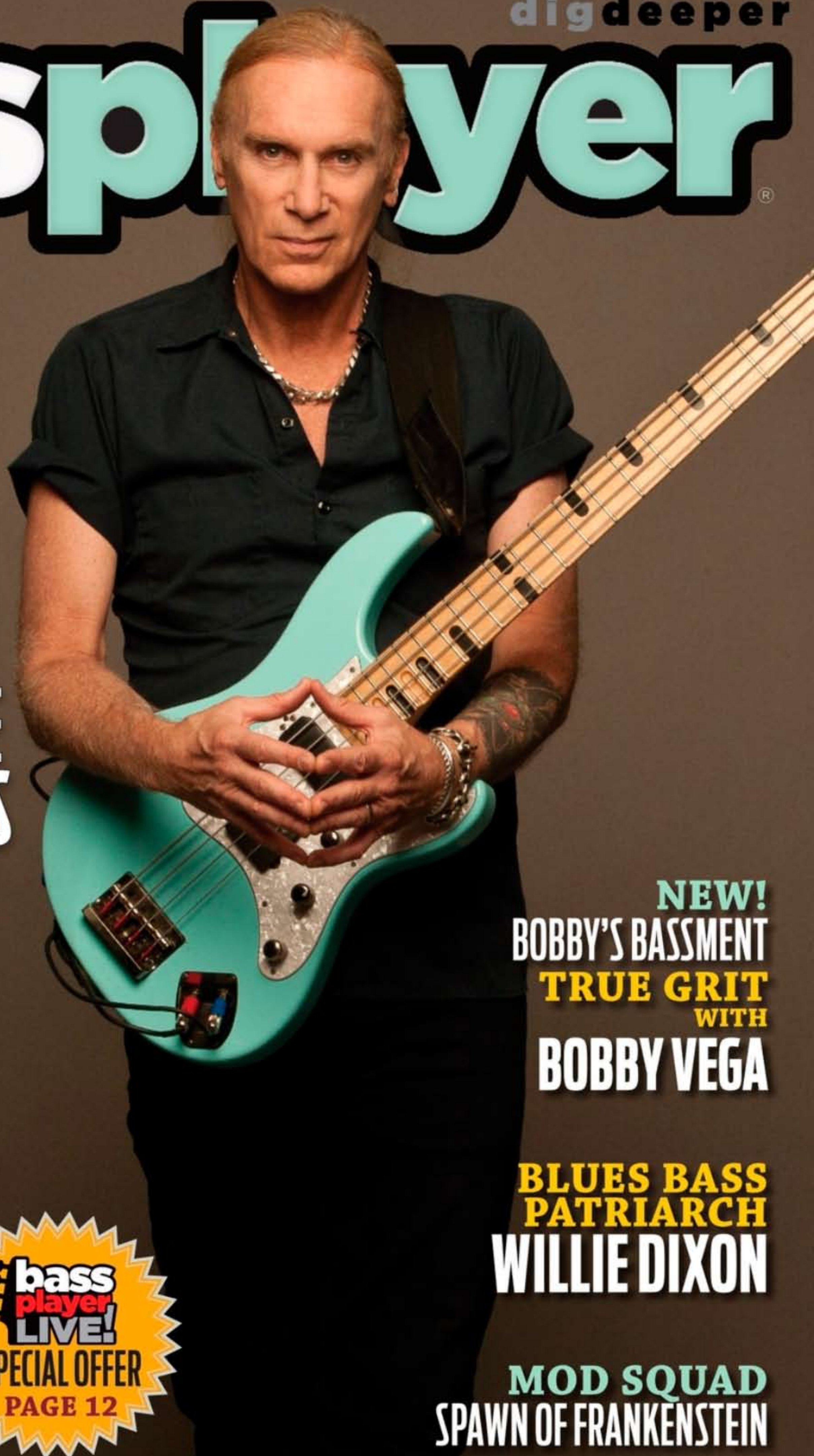
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Cover Photo: Neil Zlozower/Atlas Icons

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We are proud and honored to have Billy Sheehan as part of the Yamaha family

Billy Sheehan's control and mastery of the electric bass has influenced generations of new bass players while redefining the role of the instrument in music. You can hear his legendary work with Talas, David Lee Roth, Steve Vai, Mr. Big, Niacin, and now his new chart-topping super group, The Winery Dogs. Throughout the years, one thing remained the same. His faithful companion, the Yamaha Billy Sheehan Signature Attitude Limited bass, has been there every step of the way. The new Yamaha Attitude Limited 3 has taken Billy's iconic sound to a new level, with refined characteristics boasting Yamaha proprietary designs and technology, such as a spline body joint, exclusive ARE and IRA wood treatments together with a new neck position pickup and a reinforced neck joint. This is Attitude like you've never heard it before.

Billy—Yamaha artist since 1984.

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C COMMUNITY

LOWDOWN



BRIAN FOX

It's Not Over

AS WE WRAP UP 2013 WITH THIS SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE OF BASS PLAYER, I CAN'T

help but feel a bit anxious. Don't get me wrong—we've managed to stuff gobs of goodies in this year's final issue, from Chris Jisi's cover feature with rock god Billy Sheehan to Ed Friedland's column on blues legend Willie Dixon and our staff's look at some nifty gift ideas in gear land. Rather, it just feels strange working on the last issue of the year when there's so much left to say and play in 2013. It's especially odd closing the year out ahead of the biggest bass bash of the year, Bass Player LIVE!. In case you've been living under a rock, BPL! returns to Los Angeles November 9–10, when we'll be honoring Geezer Butler and Lee Rocker with Lifetime Achievement Awards, Willie Dixon with a Legacy Award, and Tal Wilkenfeld with a Young Gun Award at the Fonda Theater. We also have an incredible lineup of clinicians and gear displays over at S.I.R. And here's your reward for reading: BPL13Sub. That's a code that's good for 20% off tickets, which you can get at bassplayerlive.com. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got some work to do before the year runs out. Here's to good grooves in 2014!

BP 24!!!
0-11

COURT OF OPINION

What's your favorite type of pick? Sound off!

Join the conversation at facebook.com/bassplayermag.



Dunlop Jazz III.
—Coyan Retsof I



Dunlop 0.73 (yellow) and fingers. A good painter never throws away a brush.
—John Kirchner



Dunlop 2.0mm, purple with the turtle logo.
—Artie Rodriguez



Heavy celluloid works for me—mostly—and 1mm (heavy) delrin sounds a little smoother than the celluloid. I'll use medium celluloid for a brighter sound if I need it. —Craig Skoney



Jim Dunlop Big Stubby.
—Joe Iriana Jr.



Dunlop Tortex .5mm! The best pick made.
—Payton Allen



Red Brain picks, gauge 0.73. They flex more than heavier picks, but I use the round edge, not the point. I mostly use my fingers, though! —K. Doug Mason



I work between the Dunlop Tortex yellow 0.73 picks and the Tortex orange 0.60 picks to get different sounds and feel. I never use a pick that's too thick. —Andy Till



Dunlop Tortex 0.73 have been my fave for 20 years, but lately I've been a big fan of the Herco Flex 75. —Carmen Cuozzo



Dunlop Herco Golds.
—Steve Hagar



Dunlop Nylon 1.0 mm.
—Pelle Mellberg



Dunlop Tortex 0.73—and it sounds heavenly when I drop it on the floor.
—Trygve Borelli Lund



Ruben Rodriguez (left) with La Bella's Eric Cocco

Lords Of The Low End

The plush performance parlor of the Cutting Room on Manhattan's East 32nd Street was the setting for La Bella's "Lords of the Low End" on the afternoon of September 28, 2013. The charity event, organized and hosted by La Bella's Eric Cocco, benefited Little Kids Rock, which "helps restore and revitalize music education in disadvantaged public schools." For many of the over 150 who attended the four-hour foray, one look around the spacious room brought back memories of BASS PLAYER LIVE! in New York, as table tops held exotic basses at jaunty angles, floors rumbled with designer amps and effects, and elite players mingled with working bassists and musical hobbyists. Indeed, Lorenza Cocco, who assisted husband Eric, noted, "It's great to bring back to New York City a much-overdue celebration of all things bass, with the very best players and builders, while supporting a most worthy cause."



Igor Saavedra

The stage buzzed with raffle giveaways in between performances by the Little Kids Rock Band, Chilean 8-string specialist Igor Saavedra, fuze force Alain Caron, Latin ace Ruben Rodriguez, and surprise guest Jamaaladeen Tacuma. Among the more than 25 exhibitors were Roger Sadowsky, Mike Tobias (MTD), Harvey Citron, and Joe Veillette,

Aguilar, Warwick, Tech 21, Fodera, F-Bass, Brubaker, Phil Jones, Guitar Center, the Collective School of Music, and a free bass tune-up by master luthier Mas Hino at the La Bella booth. Looming low-end luminaries included session great Neil Jason, New York recording and Broadway vets Frank Gravis, Steve Millhouse, Irio O'Farrill and Lee Nadel, futurist Evan Marien, and Sean Hurley, who showed off his new Fender signature P-Bass before heading to Central Park to play the Global Citizen Festival with John Mayer. Summed up Eric Cocco, "It's an honor to be surrounded by so many innovators that I looked up to, growing up in the business. I can proudly say that every one of these companies and artists jumped at the opportunity to help raise awareness and money for Little Kids Rock." —CHRIS JISI



Alain Caron



THE REAL WORLD

Gil Carter

Home base Atlanta, Georgia

Occupation Government contractor, musician

Gigs Tragic Souls

Basses Spector NS, Fender Jazz, Schecter Stiletto, B.C. Rich Innovator, Ibanez SR500

Rig Ampeg PF-500 or Ampeg B-1RE head, Aguilar DB-924 Bass Preamp, Ampeg SVT 8x10 cab

Effects Boss CEB-3 Bass Chorus, Boss LMB-3 Bass Limiter Enhancer, Electro-Harmonix Steel Leather Bass Expander

Strings, etc. D'Addario EXL Roundwounds, Dunlop 1mm nylon pick

Heroes & inspiration Geddy Lee, John Entwistle, Chris Squire, Steve Harris

Contact facebook.com/gilcarter.7, facebook.com/tragicsoulsrock

How did you come to play bass?

I started playing drums with bands in high school. My buddies and I could never find a bass player, but we knew plenty of other drummers. I figured I'd pick up a cheap bass and amp from the local pawnshop and learn to play. Three decades later, I haven't put it down. Now I wouldn't play anything else. I just love the rumble, shaking the rafters, and pounding it out on the low end!

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

As a bass player, you have a specific role in a band and in a song. Play what's appropriate. It is bass, not lead—play simply when a simple bass line is all that is necessary, but also know when to show a little technique. Dynamics are very important.

What are your musical goals?

To keep playing shows, keep learning, and to work on singing.



Want to introduce yourself? Find submission guidelines at bassplayer.com/realworld. Get selected for The Real World and receive a set of D'Addario EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit will receive D'Addario's FretBuzz newsletter.



DIG MY RIG!



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and I are both bass players, we always agree on how to spend our money, and we've managed to put together a nice rig. From left to right: A Cort Arona 4 (my wife's main bass), a refurbished Squier P-Bass with a custom-made leather pickguard and EMG-HZ P pickups (my first bass, 11 years old now), Peavey Cirrus BXP-5 (my main bass, usually used with a Zoom B2), and a Fender T-Bucket 300 semi-acoustic that we got as a wedding present, and both play. In the back is a Gallien-Krueger 700RB-II head with a Gallien-Krueger 212 2x12 NEO speaker, and on the top of it a Roland Cube Bass 20 XL for smaller acoustic gigs and playing at home. We're now searching for a perfect fretless bass and a bigger place to live with (at least) one room just for basses.

—MARKO STOJANOVIC & MAJA KARAGA

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EXPO

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Johnny Lee Middleton (stage right) and Trans-Siberian Orchestra bring the holiday heat with their signature brand of symphonic prog-rock.





BASSNOTES



DAWES

Wylie Gelber Touch & Tone

BY JIMMY LESLIE | PHOTOGRAPH BY KERRI KELTING

“YOU CAN ARGUE ABOUT STYLE, TECHNIQUE, AND NOTE CHOICE UNTIL the end of time,” says Wylie Gelber, “but without tone and touch, you’ve got nothing.” Gelber’s clearly got something special going on with Dawes. The band has been touring relentlessly, headlining and opening shows in support of its new album, *Stories Don’t End*.

What are your thoughts on achieving the perfect bass tone?

It’s kind of a lost art. In the glory days of recorded bass—roughly 1960 to 1979—it was as easy as plugging your ’50s or ’60s P-Bass into your Ampeg B-15 or Fender Bassman and setting up a single microphone. That delivered an absolutely perfect balance of tubby low end that never dipped down into the subsonic range, with a definition that could only be achieved before the invention of the gain knob. Joseph “Lucky” Scott, Willie Weeks, Melvin Dunlap, and George Porter Jr. personify what I’m talking about. It’s the kind of bass you feel in your bones; it sits perfectly in the track in a register all to itself, never stealing the show unless the listener wants it to, and then it’s there. Once you lock into it, you’ll never miss a note. That type of sound has left me with tracks like Curtis Mayfield’s “Blue Monday People” or Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band’s “I Got Love” on repeat for days, months ... years. The challenge for the rest of us is achieving that tone, that feeling in 2013.

How do you achieve it on record and apply it live?

Unfortunately, a late-’60s [Ampeg B-15] Portaflex is not the same today as it was new, as any speaker will eventually lose its sparkle. I find that only new speakers deliver the right punch. Ideally, I prefer a set of four 10” speakers that have just started to break in after being played for three months straight.

For a live setting, the DI is extremely clutch. It’s the most commonly overlooked centerpiece of the puzzle that needs to be in place after the whole rig is dialed. Nothing twists the knife deeper than seeing everything plugged in, warmed up, and then plugged in again—to the most beat down, abused, and dirty house DI in town. Without your DI—whatever preference—you’ve just plugged everything you’ve worked so hard on into a little box of nonsense. Your signal must be a true extension of all the tone factors, and you need to have it ready to drive at a moment’s notice. Ultimately, the only thing I know to be true is: Everything sounds its best seconds before it breaks. **BP**

i INFO

LISTEN



Dawes, *Stories Don't End* [Hub, 2013]

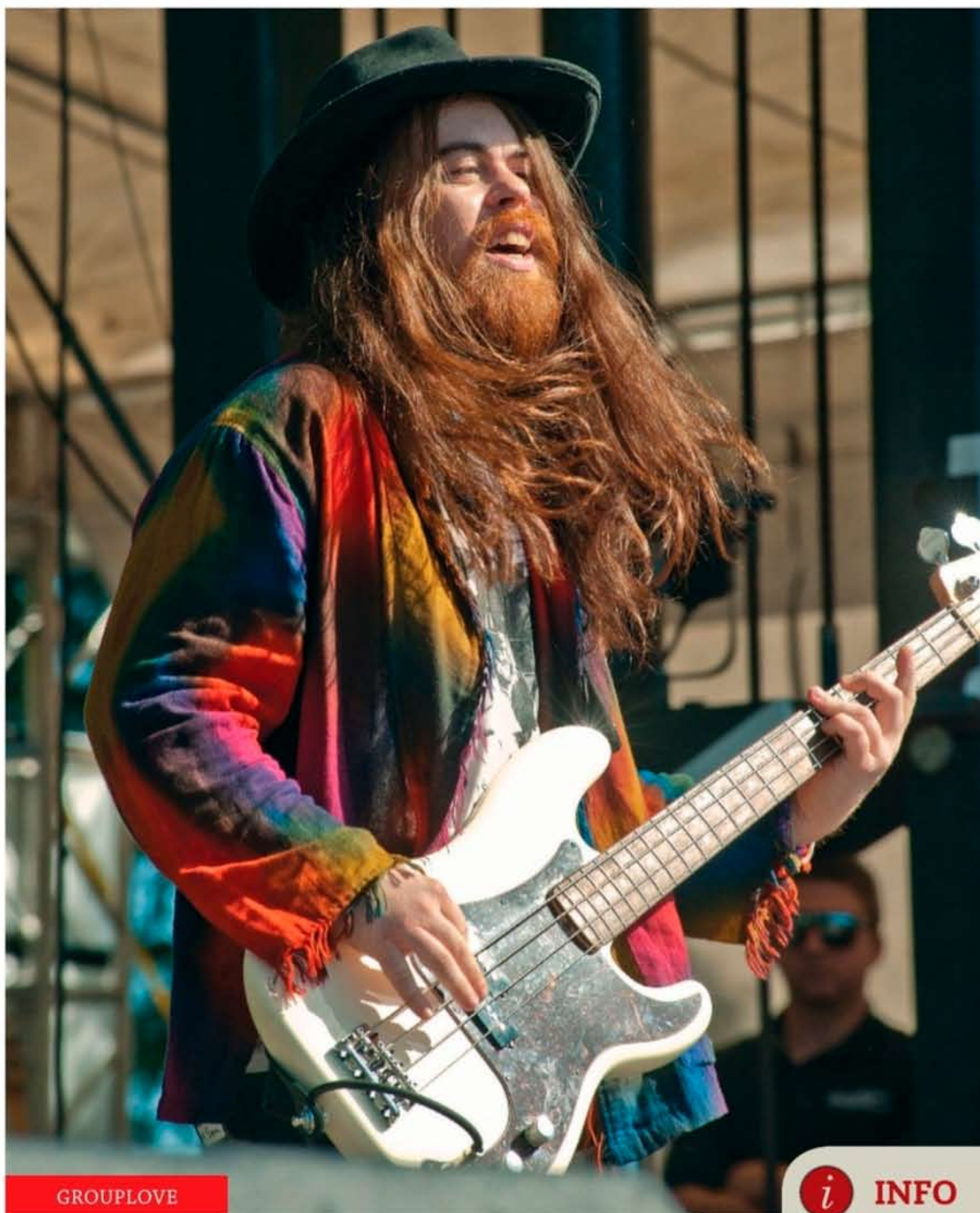
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Strings D'Aquisto Flat Wound (.045-.105)
Rig Vintage Ampeg SVT, Ampeg SVT-VR, Ampeg SVT-410HLF 4x10 cabinet, TAB Funkenwerk V71DI Mono Direct Input preamplifier

CONNECT

Watch Dawes play “From a Window Seat” at SXSW 2013. bassplayer.com/holiday2013





GROUPLOVE

Sean Gadd Habit Kicking

BY JON D'AURIA | PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL HAGGARD

SEAN GADD WAS A BUSY LONDON BASS PLAYER WHEN HE ACCEPTED a friend's invitation to go to an artists' retreat in Greece in 2009. On the journey, he befriended a group of likeminded musicians from New York and Los Angeles, with whom he soon began collaborating over the Internet. After the group's songs became online hits, Gadd made his way to L.A. Two years of touring later, Gadd and his band Grouplove have just released their second album, *Spreading Rumours*, which showcases the tasteful maturity that can only come from road-tested musicians. Gadd's playing is explosive on the band's new indie-pop material, as his driving grooves weave their way between layers of synths and guitars. Taking cues from Jack Bruce, Paul McCartney, and Krist Novoselic, Gadd not only lays down the foundation for the band, he also makes his bass serve as a lead instrument.

What's your approach to writing bass lines?

I feel like I'm best when I don't actually touch the bass. I like to think of melodies before I play anything. If you start playing bass right away, it's easy to fall into old habits; you might play the riffs you typically go to, and it's not always what a song needs. I'm not afraid to spend a long time writing a line.

Were your parts on this album set by the time you entered the studio?

I played the way I've always wanted to play bass on an album: I had the freedom to do the things I wanted. We have a lot of parts where the bass takes the lead, and I always like to be very experimental with my playing. It sent me back to the way I played bass when I first started off as a kid.

Is it hard to find space to play with so much going on in the music?

It's very easy, actually. If you see our live shows, you'll see that we're a bass-heavy band; it's very much in the forefront. Sometimes there's a lot going on, but part of being a good bass player is learning when to step back. I typically try to write lead lines on bass that you'll hear immediately within the song. I can't stand records where bass is buried in the background.

Describe your playing technique.

I've always been a fingerstyle player, but I use a pick on some new songs. I wasn't a fan of picks before, but messing around with different tones made me love playing with a pick. Live, I like to slide around all over the fingerboard and play a lot of melodic runs.

What is your ideal tone?

I come from a bluesy background, and I want the bass to sound like a bass—I don't like bass when it's too bright. I definitely like a lot of low end, but it has to cut, as well. **BP**



INFO

GROUPLOVE



Grouplove, *Spreading Rumours* [Atlantic, 2013]

LISTEN

EQUIP

Basses Fender Precision Bass, Fender Jazz Bass
Rig Ampeg BA500 Combo
Effects Electro-Harmonix Big Muff
Strings Fender Mediums



CHIC, ROBERTA FLACK, CHAKA KHAN

Jerry Barnes

On Succeeding & Interpreting Bernard Edwards

BY JIMMY LESLIE | PHOTOGRAPH BY KERRI KELTING

“WHEN BERNARD EDWARDS PASSED AWAY IN 1996,” recalls Jerry Barnes, “I sent word to Nile Rodgers through a mutual friend that if he hired anyone else for the Chic gig, I’d kill them.” It worked: Barnes impressed Rodgers and has been touring with the seminal dance outfit ever since, interpreting such iconic Edwards bass lines as “Good Times,” “Le Freak,” and “Everybody Dance.” Barnes is also a busy session player, songwriter, and producer who is currently working with the Brazilian pop group Jota Quest. We talked to the North Carolina native after Chic temporarily transformed San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park into a discotheque during the Outside Lands Festival.

Can you compare Bernard Edwards’ fingerstyle plucking to your own?

I honestly can’t, because my plucking influences were Larry Graham, Gary Grainger—whom I first saw with Pockets—and Nathaniel Phillips, particularly his playing and tone on the Pleasure song “Glide.” That was the first time I heard the sound of slap bass played on a Fender Jazz, before Marcus Miller. Bernard wasn’t an influence on my plucking, but his fingering and the way he played was a major influence.

Can you share an example of Edwards’ influence on your playing growing up and how it relates to the way you approach his parts in Chic?

Bernard’s playing on “Everybody Dance” was one of the first bass lines that made my mouth drop wide open when I heard it. I didn’t realize the proper way to play it until I saw a video of Bernard on YouTube about three years ago. The song is in the key of C, and I was playing it in a closed position rooted on the 8th fret of the E string. When I saw the video I realized he got the sound by playing it rooted on the 3rd fret of the A string and incorporating the open string in the fast chromatic runs up and down. That makes big difference sonically and in terms of execution. I’ve

i INFO



Empire of the Sun, *Ice on the Dune* [Astralwerks, 2013]; Jerry Barnes, *Funk/R&B Bass Licksamples* (DVD) [Rittor, 2008]; Raul Midón, *World Within a World* [Manhattan, 2007]

LISTEN

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EQUIP

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Jerry Barnes continued

learned from Nile that they did a lot of their writing around open strings. "Good Times" is an obvious example because it's E and A, and Bernard simply used the open strings to go back and forth.

What's the key to nailing the tones we all love from those recordings?

It's all about touch. I play some songs really light, and some really hard. When I slap a solo, I play hard. On a dance song with lots of nuance, such as "Good Times," I play softer in order to sound more like Bernard did on the record. Think about it—guys were not playing very hard on a lot of the records we grew up listening to, because they were in good studios with good headphones. Live is another animal; you're excited, and it's loud. The trick is not to get too excited and play too hard or you'll lose that studio-style tone. Playing hard isn't the best way to go, anyway, in terms of dexterity and longevity.

What are your thoughts on playing funk versus the slicker stuff you do in Chic?

My first inspiration was funk, and I still try to bring that to Bernard's bass lines. If you have a good feel, you can do either. Being a funk player enables you to play disco, whereas if you're just a disco player, it's harder for you to play funk. It's almost like how the blues is the foundation for rock & roll: If you play the blues well, you probably can do a rock gig and take your solos from a blues perspective, like Jimi Hendrix did.

What's your primary focus outside of gigging with Chic?

I produce the biggest pop band in Brazil, Jota Quest. The bass player, Paulo Roberto "P.J." Dinez Jr., is like the Bernard Edwards of Brazil. He's a pop guy who plays funk and loves Chic. He and the band's music are very much influenced by that era. **BP**

BP RECOMMENDS



NOW VS. NOW EARTH ANALOG

[nowvsnow.com]

Certified badass keyboardist Jason Lindner leads a couple other fearless ninjas—super-

human 5-stringer **Panagiotis "Pana" Andreou** and eight-limbed drummer Mark Guiliana—on a forward-edge mission that elegantly disregards artificial definitions of genre. If you must, file these ten tracks under "soulful, 21st-century electro-fusion" and then put on your headphones to fully appreciate Pana's world-music-inspired role in this dynamic, three-way mind-meld.

The opener, "Ancient Alien," first alludes to Pana's equal-voice function, as his bubbling cross-rhythm morphs into an improvised support line that both anchors and engages his trio-mates (he then adds his trademark Indian *konnakol* vocals to the outro). Elsewhere, Pana's octave-pedal part drives the bright boogaloo of "Fearless One," and he opens "Traveler" with a soulful melody before grabbing the Afro-Cuban-tinged bass line on the CD's closest pass at an analog, "acoustic" jazz tune. "Level" perhaps best sums up the unit's brilliant build-upon-repetition concept, with Pana letting loose for bouzouki-informed soaring solo (dig his sing-along vocals panned hard right). Music for now and tomorrow. —E.E. BRADMAN & CHRIS JISI



DIANNE REEVES BEAUTIFUL LIFE

[Concord]

Like her equally dynamic contemporary, Cassandra Wilson, jazz vocalist Dianne

Reeves is known for exotic covers of post-'60s pop songs and modern takes on standards. On her exceptional new CD, she recruits top bass talent in pursuit of both. Marvin Gaye's "I Want You" is a super sensual affair anchored by **Reginald Veal's** Jamerson-esque upright pulse. Bob Marley's "Waiting in Vain," which boasts Lalah Hathaway's Jamaican-style scatting in the outro, gets its feel from **Richard Bona's** percolating pickups. **Esperanza Spalding's** knack for bass lines seamlessly married to her melodies is exemplified on her "Wild Rose," for which she plucks her fretless Jazz Bass and provides background vocals. And **James Genus** and his 5-string are in prime pocket for Reeves' earthy, funkier version of Ani DiFranco's "32 Flavors" and Robert Glasper's ear-grabbing reharmonization of Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams." —CHRIS JISI



BEN KENNEY LEAVE ON YOUR MAKEUP

[Ghetto Crush]

Incubus bassist **Ben Kenney's** fifth solo album is another demonstration of his multi-

instrumental chops and diverse array of influences. While much can be said about his guitar playing, drumming, and singing, his bass work takes command as he pushes the boundaries of gritty, fuzz-driven tone. As always, his fills are tasteful and his lines precisely placed, but heavy compositions like "New Amsterdam" and the title cut reveal Kenney's ability to thrash on bass. —JON D'AURIA



GREGORY PORTER LIQUID SPIRIT

[Blue Note]

With his elastic yet vulnerable voice, conscious lyrics, and classic-sounding originals, vocalist Gregory Porter could be considered

a throwback to a time when soul, gospel, and jazz were kissin' cousins. But nostalgia alone can't explain the extraordinary hold Porter and his quartet—including the supple **Aaron James**, always playing just the right notes—exert over listeners. Hear for yourself. —E.E. BRADMAN



PEARL JAM LIGHTNING BOLT

[Monkeywrench/Republic]

Are the guys in Pearl Jam rocking harder as they get older? Call it overcompensation, but

when a free-spirited groovemeister like **Jeff Ament** is holding down the low end, anything can—and usually does—happen. On the fist-pounding "My Father's Son," the bass drives the melody, even morphing into a bossa-style figure at the bridge, while the title cut finds Ament landing instinctive and impeccably timed punches to Matt Cameron's kick drum. Like 2009's *Backspacer*, this is the sound of a band that's digging the noise it makes. —BILL MURPHY

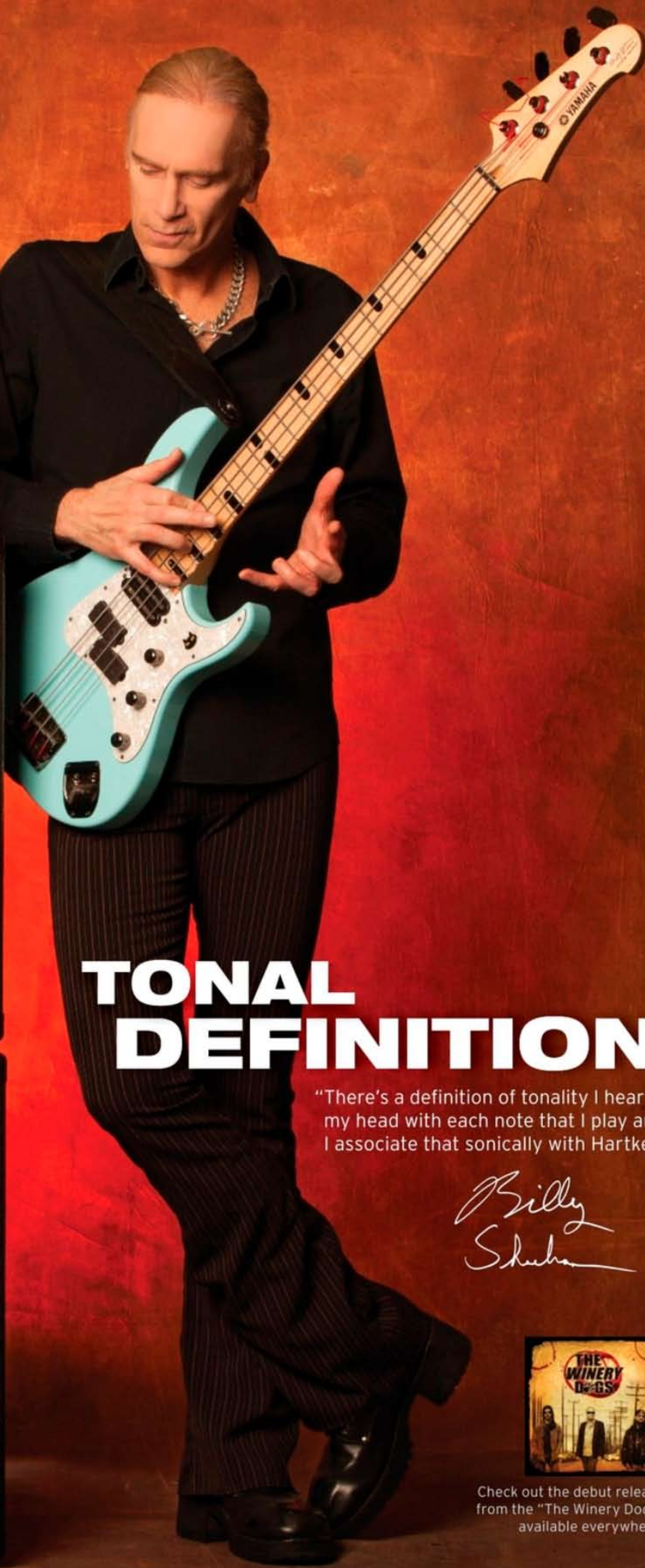
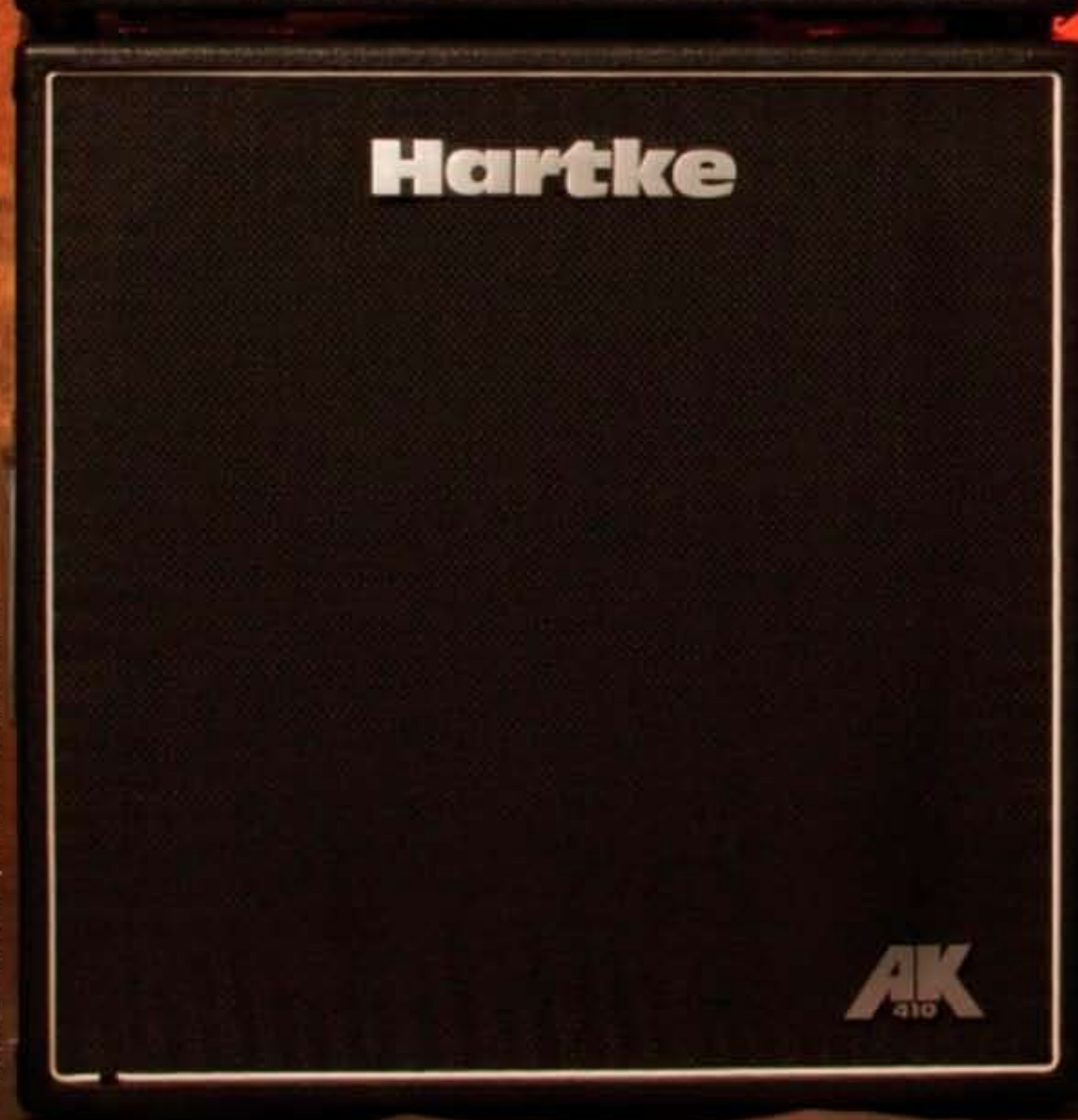
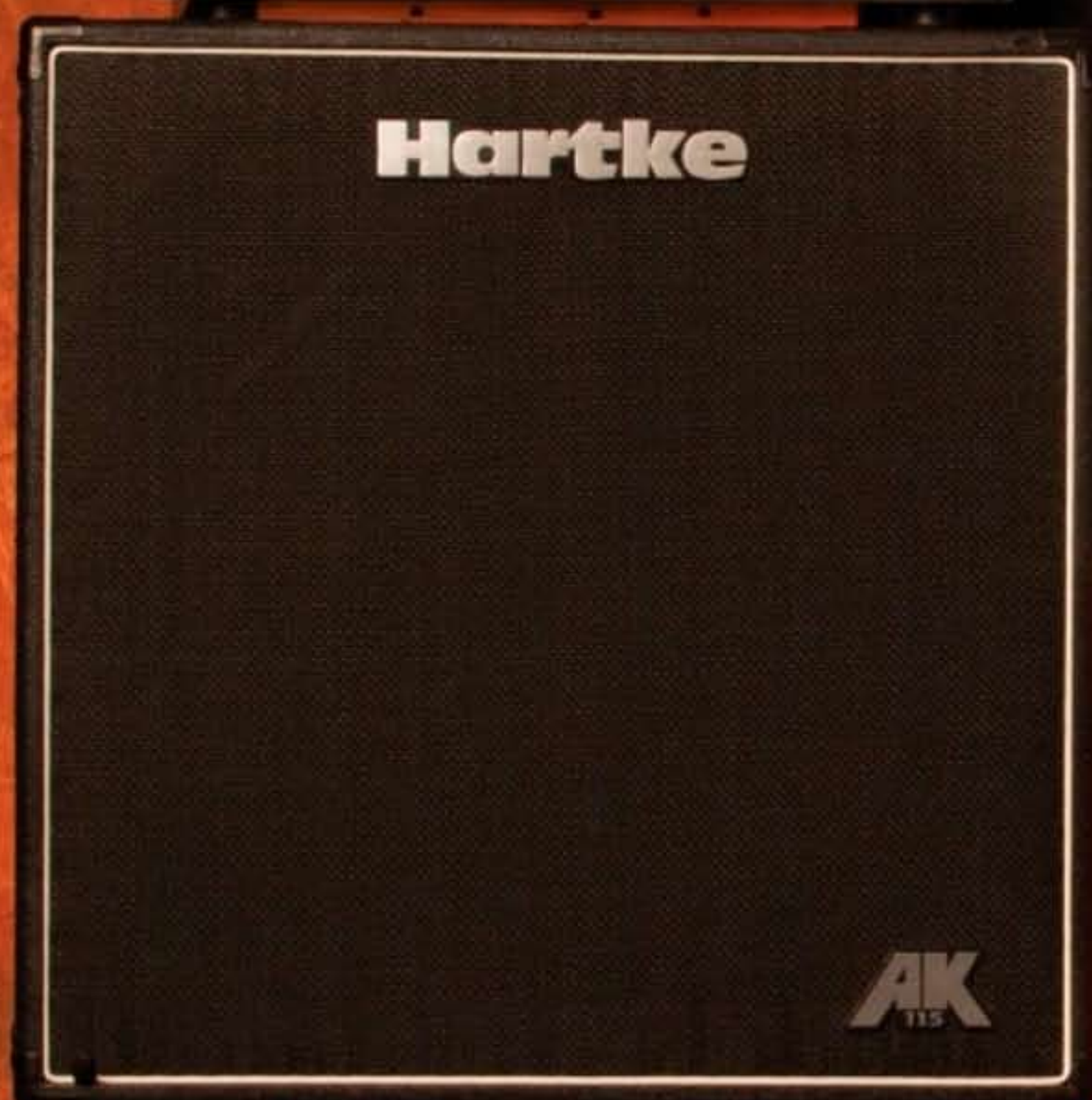


MINUS THE BEAR ACOUSTIC II

[Tigre Blanco]

On the second installment of unplugged adaptations from this indie-alternative Seattle

outfit, **Cory Murchy** uses his warm acoustic tone to bring the new renditions to life. Murchy's steady



TONAL DEFINITION

"There's a definition of tonality I hear in my head with each note that I play and I associate that sonically with Hartke."

Billy Sheehan



Check out the debut release from the "The Winery Dogs" available everywhere.



finger work provides an ample backbone to both new and old songs from their catalogue, and Murchy finds a way to push these stripped-down songs without overplaying. —JON D'AURIA



MELVINS
TRES CABRONES [Ipecac]

Turn your head for five minutes and you might miss a new Melvins album. What makes this one different: It's original drummer Mike Dillard's first appearance on an official release, and it marks current drummer **Dale Crover**'s first recorded shot at the bass. Crover is already an accomplished axeman, and it shows immediately on the menacing opener "Dr. Mule" and the floor-scraping drop-D-tuned dirge "I Told You I Was Crazy." —BILL MURPHY



ROBERT GLASPER EXPERIMENT
BLACK RADIO 2 [Blue Note]

Pianist/bandleader Glasper's fusion of jazz, R&B, and hip-hop may not sound as cutting edge as it once did, but this sequel to the band's Grammy-winning 2012 *Black Radio* does go down easy, thanks in part to **Derrick Hodge**'s masterfully restrained yet ridiculously tasty bass lines. Come for the grooves and the superfly roster of guests (Snoop! Jill Scott! Norah Jones!), and stay for the gospel-infused, low-frequency magic. —E.E. BRADMAN



EK-A-MOUSE
EK-OLOGY: REGGAE ANTHOLOGY [17 North Parade/VP]

In the high-flying '80s, it was typical for Jamaican singing stars like Ripton Joseph Hylton, better known as Eek-A-Mouse, to work with all the hottest bands—most notably the Roots Radics, with **Errol "Flabba" Holt** and Lincoln "Style" Scott on drums. On this stellar (and long overdue) retrospective, Flabba's signature dry-and-heavy tone and steady pocket frees up the Mouse to work his magic on such classics as "Noah's Ark" and the devastating dub jam "Assassinator." —BILL MURPHY



SUPHALA
ALIEN ANCESTRY [Tzadik]

This New York City-based composer/tabla maestro's fourth album is packed with complex and languid Indian grooves, a cool duet with pianist Vijay Iyer, as well as brilliant contributions from Middle Eastern-flavored, jazz-savvy collaborators. The last and longest track, "Vashikaran," bears the inimitable imprint of **Bill Laswell**, whose chorused Precision just might inspire intrepid bassists to rewind, plug in, and add their own low end to the rest of this sublime disc. —E.E. BRADMAN **BP**

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OSIAMO

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Street D-55 Aerolite Compressor, \$135; D-53 Sparrow Driver & DI, \$140; D-52 Soloman Bass Overdrive, \$125

Contact osiamo.com

STUDIOFEED

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Beloved synth icon Moog now offers three new compact, bass-friendly pedals. The MF Ring puts the sound of the classic Moogerfooger MF-102 Ring Modulator into a more compact, battery-powered stompbox. The MF Boost, blessed with natural compression, allows you to select between an articulate VCA signal path and a colored OTA signal path. The MF Drive is a unique, filter-based overdrive pedal that employs a Moog Ladder Filter, boutique FET amplifiers, and classic OTAs in its drive section, making it highly reactive to input gain and picking dynamics. All three offer many more possibilities when connected to an expression pedal.

Street Drive, \$180; Ring, \$160; Boost, \$150

Contact moogmusic.com



SOURCE AUDIO

OFD Bass microModeler

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Street \$170

Contact sourceaudio.net

FENDER

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Fender puts a new spin on '60s Precision and '70s Jazz Basses with the Vintage Hot Rod series. The Vintage Hot Rod '60s Precision features the ash body, "C"-profile maple neck, and rosewood fingerboard you might expect, but its American Vintage '63 Precision Bass split single-coil and '64 Jazz Bass single-coil (bridge) pickups help it stand out from the crowd. The Vintage Hot Rod '70s Jazz Bass, meanwhile, has an alder body, maple neck with "U"-shaped profile, maple neck and rosewood fingerboard, white pearl-oid block inlays, and a P/J setup, thanks to its American Vintage '63 split single-coil Precision Bass and '74 Jazz Bass single-coil pickups.

Street \$2,200

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Direct BG250-112 1x12, \$350;

BG250-115 1x15, \$400; BG250-208

2x8, \$500; BG250-210 2x10, \$550

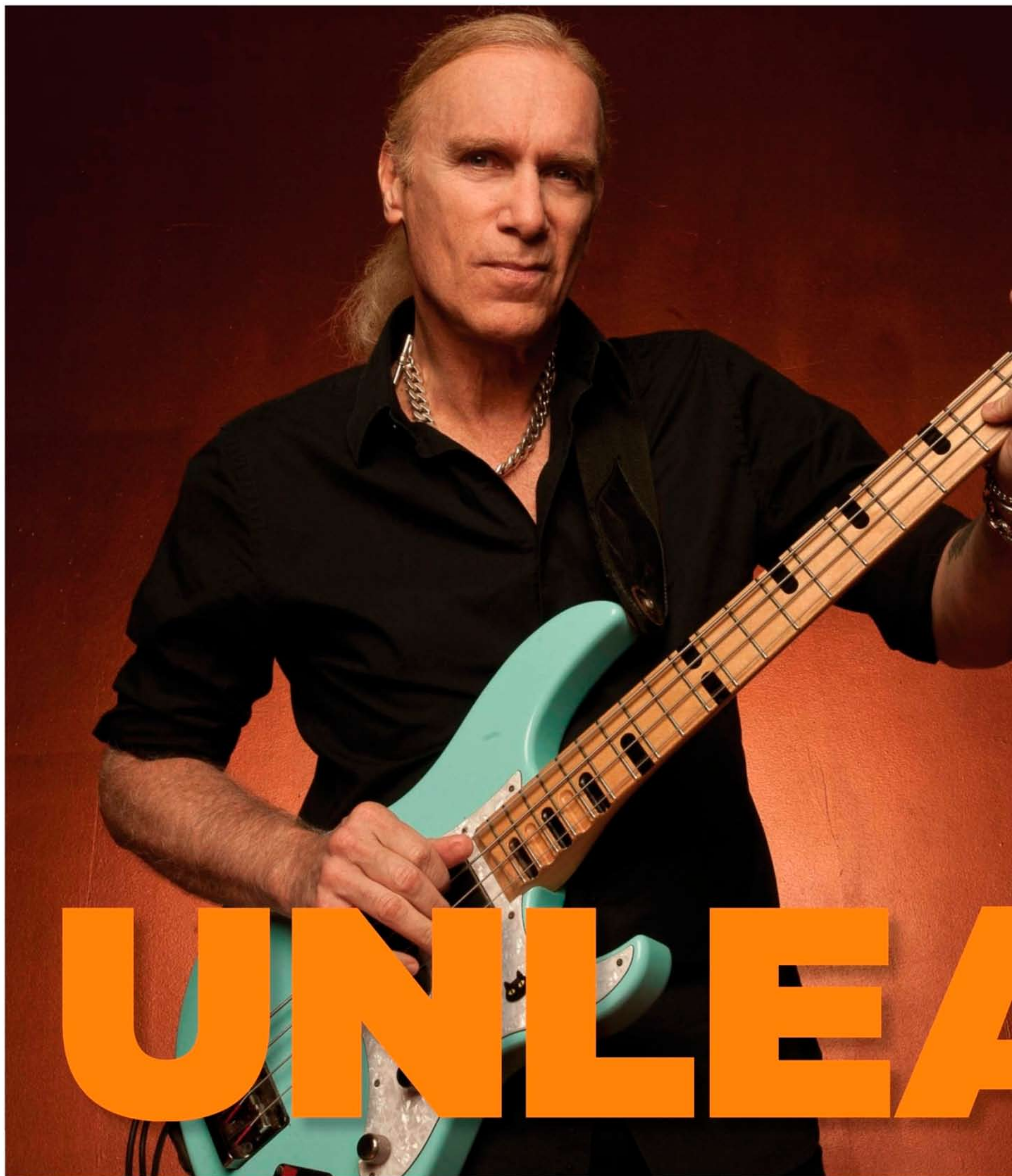
Contact tcelectronic.com



Hot Rod Jazz Bass

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BILLY SHEEHAN

BRINGS HIS TRIO SWAGGER TO THE WINERY DOGS

BILLY SHEEHAN MAY BE THE MOST USER-FRIENDLY BASS HERO IN ROCK HISTORY.

For someone who has forged an inimitable “lead bass” style, rife with innovative techniques, unparalleled physical command, and innate musicality (first developed in his early trio, Talas, where he had to compensate for missing instrumental and vocal parts of cover tunes with his bass), Billy is as open-minded as it gets. He can be found anchoring smash hits by David Lee Roth and Mr. Big, shredding instrumental rock with Greg Howe, Tony MacAlpine, Steve Vai, and Steve Morse, and even issuing walking bass lines for Niacin’s pile-driving jazz-fusion. The truth is, regardless of role or style, Sheehan is in his element as long as he’s playing—which he perpetually is.

Billy’s latest project, the Winery Dogs, is a tailor-made culmination of sorts. It gathers Sheehan and a couple of his longtime running mates—Poison guitarist/vocalist Richie Kotzen and Dream Theater

BY CHRIS JISI

Photograph by Neil Zlozower/Atlas icons

ASHED

EX. 3

Medium rock
♩ = 96

A5

1.

2.

B R S

5 5 5 6 5 3 5 5 5 3 0 3 5 3 5 3 5 6 \ 5 3 5 3 3 4 5 5 3 0

3.

4.

5

RIT LIT RMT RIT LIT RMT RIT LIT RMT RIT LIT S

LMT LIT RIT LMT LIT LMT RIT LMT LIT RIT

19 17 17 14 19 17 17 15 \ 12 21 19 17 21 19 17 17 15 14 14 12 10 12 \

S

5

RIT = Right index tap RMT = Right middle tap LIT = Left index tap LMT = Left middle tap

FINE LINES

LIKE A VINTAGE BORDEAUX,

Billy Sheehan displays the wisdom of his years throughout his bass work on *The Winery Dogs*, while also bringing the kinetic snarl of a Rottweiler puppy where required. **Example 1** shows the opening (and main) riff of the first single, "Elevate," doubled by Richie Kotzen's guitar. Says Billy, "We all wrote the riff [shown in the first three measures], and Richie came up with the tap-and-hammer part [in the 2nd ending]. After that, we had to watch Mike for his cue, because the held notes [A and E] have different lengths later in the track."

Example 2 is from the intro and verse sections of "You Saved Me." "I came up with this figure using a technique I had only tried in solo performances: hammering a high left-hand figure on the G and D strings while reaching back and tapping a low note on the A or E strings with my right hand—and Mike put a cool beat to it, and then Richie started playing to it. So we kept it as the main support part of the verse, which makes for a nice contrast with the next section, where we move to more traditional trio roles." As with most of his index taps, Billy puts his middle finger behind his index finger for more weight and power as he taps each root here.

Finally, **Ex. 3** shows the main one-bar verse riff of "Time Machine," as heard from 2:10, where Billy is spotlighted playing four one-bar solo fills in-between. "For the riff [bar 1], initially I was fretting the B $\flat$, but Richie liked the wavering sound of a bend up [toward the A string] from the A note, so he asked me to play it that way, too. He has a unique left-hand approach, and if I copy him, whatever we're playing flows better—plus, he plays without a pick now, so we're both fingerstyle." Billy continues, "My first fill [first ending] is just a bass lick to keep the groove going. The second one is a response to the syncopated kick-drum figure Mike played [the tied C's at the end of beat two—catch that syncopation]. Richie and I came up with the third and fourth fills, and he doubles me." Be aware of the fourth sextuplet in the third ending [on the "and" of *three*], as it doesn't follow the sequential pattern of the previous three sextuplets. Likewise, in the fourth ending, the sequential pattern on beat two doesn't continue on beat *three*.

drummer Mike Portnoy—with champagne results. Their self-titled debut disc (which entered the Billboard charts at No. 27) is a modern-rock melting pot of powerhouse hooks and plucking pyrotechnics, informed by '70s classic rock, '90s metal, R&B, and blues, and delivered through Kotzen's nuanced vocals. Cast in the comfort of a Talas-like role, Billy brings Hendrix-grade heft in setting a high watermark for the bass in a vocal power trio. From deep, funky ostinatos and well-placed long tones to hammered-and-tapped chordal creations and blinding solo flights, Sheehan is at once crafty, assured, and inspired in filling any and all trio roles, while remaining firmly in service to the songs. We connected with the affable 4-stringer in Hollywood, in between foreign and domestic dates with the Dogs, to catch up on the state of all things Billy.

How did the Winery Dogs come together?

Mike and I have played a lot together over the years; he came to me and said he wanted to do a vocal power-trio project, and I agreed. We dallied around looking for a great singing-and-songwriting guitarist, and finally [radio host] Eddie Trunk suggested Richie Kotzen. I knocked myself in the head because I see Richie often; he's a buddy but I just hadn't thought of him. So Mike flew to L.A. and we went into Richie's small studio, with little, off-brand amps and drums, and we started jamming. We came up with five pieces of music that first day, so we knew we were on the right track. For the next session Richie brought in two songs and we collaborated on a few more, and after another couple of sessions we began laying down tracks. Mike and I cut together in the studio, with Richie playing in the control room. Then we went back and made a few fixes and overdubs, but mostly we recorded live.

There are all sorts of interpretations of the band name.

That was the hardest part, naming the band! We had all kinds of wacky ideas, and our press kit deadline was coming up when Richie's friend suggested Winery Dogs. I went home and Googled it and learned they're dogs kept at the vineyard to protect the place. Others read into it that Winery represents our meticulous, virtuoso side, while Dogs stands for our raw, rock side; I hadn't thought of that, but it makes sense. But we had no plan for what the music should sound like or who it should target. We just went in and played with the intention of creating songs and fitting our personalities to them. The songwriting is the foundation.

What was your concept for the bass role?

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BILLY SHEEHAN

The three-piece setting has always worked well for me, growing up playing in Talas, so I sort of revisited that approach, hopefully with a little more wisdom under my belt now. I love the counterpoint you can get from three independent parts, especially when the two melodic lines are interacting to create a third element that really only exists in the listener's mind. There's so much you can imply harmonically and emotionally with two notes as they move against each other. I also enjoy being a third equal voice; I can lay down or double a riff, take a solo, or fill an unexpected role, like playing the chordal part in the verses of "You Saved Me."

The other key was adapting to the musicians I'm playing with. Mike and I tend to do the same moves; he'll play a fill and I'll play the same amount of notes, and we'll look at each other, like, Wow—how did you know how many notes I was gonna play? I also love that he's showing people how well he can throw down a straight backbeat groove, which he's not known for. It's the same with Richie; he's such a soulful singer—sort of a blend of Paul Rogers, Rod Stewart, and Prince—that I just want to pull back my playing and hear him sing. I'm excited that Richie's diverse talents as a guitarist, vocalist, and composer are finally being spotlighted to the world.

Richie joins your solos halfway through on "Elevate," "Desire," "Not Hopeless," and "Time Machine," giving them more of a composed feeling.

That's accurate, although for various reasons. On "Elevate" Richie wanted to join in, while "Desire" is more of a written instrumental. Generally, I didn't want to have just a bass solo all the way through, so I would ask Mike to interact, or Richie and I would come up with something. That happened on "Time Machine" and "Not Hopeless." I was doing these solos off the top of my head, so when I had to go back and learn them to show Richie, or later to play them live, it took me forever; I still don't think I have "Hopeless"—which is partly in seven—right. The other cool part of that track is Richie's solo, which is so saxophonic I can almost hear the pads closing on the body of the sax. I'm a huge fan of tenor saxophonists like Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, and Eddie Harris, and Richie has a jazz side, having played with Stanley Clarke and Lenny White.

How did you approach your sound and tone?

I pretty much stayed with my signature tone that I've had for ages. I always try to get my tone to where a single note takes up a lot of bandwidth, with overtones and grit, so there's a lot more going on than just that single frequency. Each producer

Billy Sheehan can do anything

Billy Sheehan has been playing the ideal notes in all the right places since the 1970s.

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CS

BILLY
SHEEHAN

MARCUS CUFF

and engineer I encounter treats my sound differently, so it always takes some effort on my part to have it done the way I like. Here, we produced ourselves, so I had complete control. Jay Ruston, who mixed the record, told me he just put the three bass faders up and didn't touch them. We had a clean/low end channel and a distortion channel from my miked rig, and the third channel was a direct regular tone from my P-Bass pickup.

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The Winery Dogs (from left):
Sheehan, Mike Portnoy, and
Richie Kotzen

verses; when we play it live Richie drops out, so it's just voice, bass, and drums, which leaves all kinds of room. My part is a little Sly & the Family Stone-ish, as they had a big influence on me. In Richie's song "Damaged," I went for a sound with less overtones to match the clean guitar. It reminds me of a Bad Company-type groove, and Boz Burrell always had an awesome bass tone, so I mimicked that.

There are tempo or feel changes in a number of songs, including "The Other Side" and "Six Feet Deeper."

"The Other Side" actually has three feels. Mike

starts with a double-time, oddball feel where the snare is the downbeat, then he flips to normal time for the chorus, and then we go to half-time for the guitar solo at the end, which we also do in "Six Feet Deeper." That's a nod to something they did in the '60s and '70s; sometimes it's kind of cool to pull back, open things up, and loosely jam in the outro, instead of continuing to tighten up the intensity. In contrast, "Time Machine" doubles up at the end.

The CD closes with two ballads that stray the furthest from the band's rock core: "Dying,"

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TEN FROM BILLY'S ITUNES

"People ask me how my style has evolved over the course of my career," says Billy Sheehan, "and I tell them about my iTunes collection, which is now over a terabyte. Here's a sample—some incredible, some incredibly bad. A great evening of entertainment!"

1. **Supersax** *Live in 75 The Japanese Tour*, "Salt Peanuts": Just got into this. Awesome! The 'bone player is amazing!
2. **Deb Hyer** *One Man Band*: So gloriously awful. Songwriting to make you cringe, played terribly. Great stuff!
3. **Crosby, Stills & Nash** *Demos*, "Déjà vu": The song demo; utterly breathtaking. Perfect.
4. **Art Tatum** *Piano Genius*, "Willow Weep for Me": Demonstrating capabilities beyond comprehension. Genius!
5. **Joan Baez** "Diamonds in Rust": You know the Judas Priest version; this is the original. Spectacular!
6. **Kim Mitchell** *Ain't Life Amazing*, "I Got a Line on You": What an incredible remake! Supreme talent.
7. **Nancy Sinatra & Lee Hazelwood** "Some Velvet Morning": So bad, it's good!
8. **Os Kriptions** *Cazumbi—African '60s Garage*, "Billy Boom": Psychotic drums! Worth looking for.
9. **Jason Crest** *Rubble Vol. 4*, "Black Mass": Catastrophic! On my short list of the worst ever! Love it!
10. **Cat Thai Beat a Go-Go Vol. 1**, "Hit the Road Jack": The whole Thai Beat a Go-Go is incredible, but this one stands out. Dreadful beyond words, but somehow sweet and charming.

and the 12/8 soul lament "Regret," with Richie on piano.

We put those at the end because it's like when the credits roll on a film. "Dying" has proven to be a real crowd favorite, like [Mr. Big's] "To Be With You." We played it live in Brazil the day after the album came out, and the whole audience sang it so loud I couldn't hear the band! Bass-wise, I tried to let my part breathe in the beginning, and then I add some motion with fills in the second verse. "Regret," which Richie brought in, is one of my favorite pieces of music I've ever been involved with; I get misty-eyed playing it live. Onstage, when Richie leaves the piano, I play his root notes with my left foot on my MIDI pedal, using a grand piano patch; very soon I'll be able to program the full chords on my new McMillen 12-Step MIDI pedal.

Have you developed any new techniques?

On the album, not so much; I'm still using my three-finger [index/middle/ring] plucking technique, but I've brought a few new approaches to the live environment, because that's the true test. One is flamenco-style plucking, using my thumb,



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-John Patitucci

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index, and middle fingers back and forth across the strings. Another is double hammering [tapping/hammering with both hands], which I did a bit of in my "Not Hopeless" solo. It's a crazy way to get a lot of notes at high speed. And I've expanded on my two-handed octave taps, where I would tap A's at the E string's 5th fret and the D string's 7th fret with my left hand, and the A string's 12th fret A and the G string's 14th-fret A with my right, and alternate them back and forth using the drum rudiments I've learned over the years. Now I'm running them up and down the neck in different intervals, with one hand following the other; it's a cool, percussive way to get linear movement. My general approach to a new technique is to drill it all day long to get the hand strength and the patterns in my head robotically, and then throw all of that out the window and hope the result is some real, organic music down the line.

What are your thoughts on the last Mr. Big CD and tour, and how does the band differ from the Winery Dogs?

We got the offer to record *What If...* following our 2009 20th Anniversary tour, and we did it like our first album, which was to get in a room and write. It ended up being one of the best-reviewed records I've ever done, and we went on a very successful world tour to support it. We're all great friends and we'll definitely do more Mr. Big projects, but in the meantime I live to play live. It's my lifeblood. So, after that tour ended I formed an instrumental band with Mike [Portnoy], Tony MacAlpine, and Derek Sherinian, and we toured the world and released a live CD and DVD. From there came Winery Dogs. Really, the difference between Winery and Big is the different musical personalities. We have a similar writing approach,

and one is a four-piece, but Paul [Gilbert] is a much different guitarist than Richie. Both scenes are great and fun for me to find my place in.

What did you take from your albums and tours with Niacin?

Well, [drummer] Dennis Chambers changed my life. I will flat out say he's the greatest musician I've ever worked with. Having only played in rock bands, with rock timing my whole life, the first time I recorded with Dennis, he played some fills that felt lost in the middle to me. I thought, I'd better shut my mouth—it's Dennis Chambers. So I was biting my tongue and listening, and just as I was about to say something, a huge lightbulb went off over my head, and I realized he was right on! It was my sensibility that didn't fit. Dennis opened up whole new feels and subdivisions for me; playing with him was a Ph.D. in groove and time. Some of my greatest onstage moments ever were sitting next to him on a barstool at the Baked Potato, locking into him like a vice grip, and hanging on for the ride. He also taught me not to rely on the drummer's time—to have my own internal clock, which is essential in

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i INFO



The Winery Dogs, *The Winery Dogs* [Loud-N-Proud, 2013]; Portnoy, Sheehan, MacAlpine, Sherinian, *Live in Tokyo* [Eagle Rock, 2013]; Mr. Big, *What If...* [Frontiers, 2010], *Back to Budokan* [Frontiers, 2009], *Holy Cow!* [Victor, 2008], *Prime Cuts* [Magna Carta, 2006]

LISTEN

Basses Yamaha Billy Sheehan

Attitude Bass ("This is the third version; it has a new angled, deeper neck joint, artificially aged wood, a little louder neck pickup, and a lighter trussrod." The bass also has separate outputs for its DiMarzio Will Power Neck and Will Power Middle pickups, a Hipshot D-Tuner, and frets 17-21 on the G and D strings are scalloped.)

Strings Rotosound BS66 Billy Sheehan Signature Stainless Steel Roundwounds (.043, .065, .080, .110)

Rig Hartke HA5500 head and AK115 cabinet (for high end), LH1000 head and AK410 cabinet (for low end)



Effects EBS-BS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive Bass Pedal ("I run separate channels for clean and distortion"); MXR M87 Bass Compressor; McMillen 12 Step MIDI controller pedal
Other DiMarzio straps & cables; Real Rock Gemstone Guitar Picks



Check in with the Winery Dogs, visit Billy's website and Twitter feed, and learn more about Billy's gear.

bassplayer.com/holiday2013

CONNECT

case anyone else loses the time. So the Niacin experience with Dennis and [organist] John Novello was a blessing, and I'm sure we'll do it again.

With a Winery Dogs world tour underway, you've proven to be unstoppable. What keeps you going?

I'm more enthused than ever about getting to my bass each day to practice and play. I know so

many musicians who have gotten tired of it and are not excited about playing anymore; I'm as excited as I was at 16! I sit with my iPhone and video myself whenever I get an idea; I must have over 300 of these little movies that I've got to scroll through to see which ones are worthwhile. I don't know what has kept me so inspired, but I'm extremely grateful. **BP**

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CHARNETT MOFFETT

BRIDGES HIS UPRIGHT, ELECTRIC
& PICCOLO BASS EXPLORATIONS
ON TWO NEW RELEASES

BY CHRIS JISI

IF ANYONE CAN LOOK BACK, IT'S CHARNETT MOFFETT.

From opening for the Isley Brothers with the Moffett Family Band as an eight-year-old bass guitarist (with upright soon to follow), to riding the wave of the young lions of straightahead jazz with Wynton and Branford Marsalis as a teen, to apprenticeships with Art Blakey, Tony Williams, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, and Ornette Coleman (his first name is a contraction of Charles—his dad—and Ornette), Moffett has had an enviable career. Yet the New York-born, Bay Area-raised bassist maintains a forward-thinking focus. “We only move in one direction; what you did today already happened, so what are you going to do tomorrow? I’m constantly pushing myself to discover new possibilities and present them in

a positive light.” That helps explain the busy Moffett’s prolific solo catalogue, which has now reached the dozen mark with the release of two new CDs. *The Bridge: Solo Bass Works* is a solo upright tour de force rife with the conventional and unconventional ways Charnett learned to navigate his instrument in the name of his art. *Spirit of Sound* incorporates his fretless and piccolo bass guitars, as well as members of his musical inner circle, for a joyous, melodic journey. We cornered Moffett at the Jazz Standard in midtown Manhattan long enough to get the lowdown on his dual discs.

What led you to record *The Bridge*?

Over the course of the nine albums I’d released previously, I had





never recorded a solo upright bass record. My producer, Mary Ann Topper, suggested I do songs in tribute to the greats I've had the good fortune to work with, as well as the masters I've been influenced by—which was a splendid idea. “The Slump” and “Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit” were my features with Tony Williams and McCoy Tyner, respectively, and after recording “Black Codes (From the Underground)” with Wynton Marsalis, we played it on the Grammys. Other tunes, like “Caravan” and “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be,” are nods to Ellington, Jimmy Blanton, Ray Brown, and my longtime tenure with the Manhattan Jazz Quintet, all in one.

Among the interesting textures is your bow tapping on “Kalengo.”

That’s a classical technique I’m applying in an improvised jazz format, on a song inspired by Chick Corea’s rhythmic and melodic concepts. I use the back of the bow to tap the strings just above the bridge, while fingering notes with my left hand. It’s all about the touch and attack; if you hit the string too hard you won’t get the overtones, and if you hit it too soft you don’t get the natural percussive effect. There are other tracks that feature unconventional approaches, like the sliding harmonics on “Oversun,” and the use of effects and the bow on “Free Your Mind.”

What was your concept for *Spirit of Sound*?

It’s inspired by the human voice, which is featured in vocalese, spoken word, and wordless vocal melodies, as well as emulated by my fretless, piccolo, and upright basses. With the popularity of rap, I wanted to do something artistic and poetic along those lines, while continuing to develop my composing and playing voice. The CD features members of the Moffett Family Band and guests from my Motéma Music label family.

World and folk music elements dominate the harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestration aspects of most of your compositions.

That comes from my earliest experiences with the Moffett Family Band in the mid ’70s. I was a little kid with a half-size bass, and we toured the Far East, so the first sounds I got accustomed to were Eastern tonalities, which remain natural to me. The way my dad trained me back then was, “These are the high notes, and these are the low notes; find out how many ways you can use them together to make a clear, consonant sound.” It wasn’t until a little later that I learned Western harmony. But it was a great way to express myself creatively: Here are the colors, play whatever you want. That, blended with my years of traditional schooling and experiences as a sideman, is what my music is made of.

Who are your main bass and non-bass influences?

Obviously my dad, drummer Charles Moffett Sr.; he had a concept he called “freedom with discipline,” which meant having the freedom to play whatever you hear, while also having the discipline to develop the technique that allows you to execute it. For bass, it was all the greats: Ray Brown, Ron Carter, Paul Chambers, Mingus, Charlie Haden, Stanley Clarke, Jaco, Larry Graham. I always wanted to have my own voice, so I borrowed from those

i INFO

LISTEN



Charnett Moffett, *Spirit of Sound* [Motéma Music, 2013], *The Bridge: Solo Bass Works* [Motéma Music, 2013]; Will Calhoun, *Life in This World* [Motéma Music, 2012]; Jana Herten, *Passion of a Lonely Heart* [Motéma Music, 2012]; Stanley Jordan, *Friends* [Mack Avenue, 2011]

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Upright basses Kolstein
Lee Rocker Busetto
Travel Bass with Kolstein
Heritage Orchestral/
Jazz Perlon Bass Strings,
Barbera bridge pickup,
Planet Wing pickup for
bowing, Brazilian-made
French-style bow



Electric basses Moon fretless J Bass; Moon piccolo bass
Strings D’Addario EPS165SL Pro Steels (.045–.105); D’Addario EXL280 Nickel Wound Piccolo Bass (.020, .032, .042, .052)
Rig SWR SM-900 head with Goliath 4x10 cabinet
Effects Boss CEB-3 Bass Chorus, Boss RV-5 Digital Reverb, Boss DD-3 Digital Delay, Boss GEB-7 Bass EQ, Dunlop Cry Baby Wah, Fulltone Bass-Drive MOSFET
Studio Busetto via Neumann KM 84 mic on bridge, with Barbera pickup direct; electric basses direct and via miked SWR Redhead

players conceptually more than note-for-note—although I did my share of the latter in high school and at Juilliard. My two biggest non-bass playing influences are Ravi Shankar and Jimi Hendrix.

As someone who doubles, what have you brought from each instrument to the other, and how do you choose one for a song?

I’ve never been able to slap on upright the way the late, great Milt Hinton did, so I took my experience slapping on the electric and applied it the same way on upright. Conversely, I’ve adapted upright walking concepts to the electric bass. I find that certain instruments work better on certain songs; “Spirit of Sound” just wouldn’t sound the same on electric, while “Overpass” wouldn’t sound right on upright. Overall, the range I can cover with upright, fretless, and fretted piccolo bass—each in 4-string configurations—is most comfortable for me in terms of expressing myself. The whole point of playing music is to share with others the emotional and intellectual thought process of how you feel as an artist. **BP**



Adam Nitti
Solo artist

Jett Beres
Sister Hazel

Brandon Leitru
For Today

Matt DeVries
Fear Factory

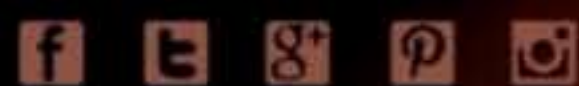
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Ibanez





SOUNDRoom

Accessories Roundup

BY BRIAN FOX & THE BP STAFF |

“SO, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR [INSERT holiday/occasion here]?” It’s a question I’ve tried to dodge since I was a kid, hoping, I suppose, that the person who cared enough to ask would somehow also develop the ability to read minds, so as to save me from the embarrassment of requesting a gift by name. Perhaps you, too, field this request around this time of year. Whether that’s the case or you’re drawing up shopping lists for musician friends of your own, here are a few sundry items that might merit a spot on your “nice” list.

TIMBRE TONES

STAR TONES & LEATHER TONES PLECTRUMS

Street Star Tones, \$6.50; Leather Tones, \$4.80

Contact timbre-tones.com

Looking to upgrade your run-of-the-mill pick to a proper posh plectrum? Check out Timbre Tones. Using wood scraps from furniture mills and animal bi-products from the meat, dairy, and leather industries, this British company has been crafting luxury picks since 2009. We took a look at two of the brand’s pick lines: Star Tones and Leather Tones.

With a large triangular shape and hole drilled in the center for better grip, the massive Star Tones picks take a bit of getting used to, and hand fatigue can begin to set in before too long. But the investments in time, effort, and finances are well worth it. Each of the two wooden Star Tones—one rosewood, one ebony—has its own sound and feel, with rosewood producing a darker, more mellow tone, and the ebony pick having a quicker, clangier attack. My favorite was the white horn, which gave notes a massive fundamental with little of the upper-frequency click that comes from synthetic picks. There is little to no flex in the rigid Star Tones, but the picks’ contoured shape keep them from getting hung up in the strings. If you’re a pickstyle player looking for a little extra low-end oomph, look no further.

Looking for old-school thump? It’s hard to beat Leather Tones plectrums, which are available with stiffness ranging from flaccid to firm. For bass, firm is the way to go; especially when combined with palm-muting, the stiffer brown and black Leather Tones yield a click-free attack akin to thumbstyle playing, and work especially well on mellow tunes and ballads. Being smooth on one side and suede on the other, the Leather Tones sound and feel slightly different on up- and downstrokes when alternate picking, but that does little to take away from their ability to produce tones you’ve maybe never heard before. —BF





ALLPARTS

BULLET GUITAR JACK TIGHTENER

Street \$12

Contact allparts.com

It's always a bit freaky to grab your bass or guitar before a gig and notice that the input jack is dangerously loose. You certainly don't want an epic detachment and signal fail during a monitor leap or inadvertent "necktie" snap when you've jogged beyond the length of your cable. The Bullet makes it safe and easy to batten down your jack in no time—even moments before you hit the stage—and all without having to remove the jackplate. Made of high-impact plastic that won't mar finishes or hardware, the tool fits ½" nuts, and employs a patented Grip-Tip to secure the jack (and avoid twisting wires and solder) while you tighten things up. The Bullet is a breeze to use. Just place the tool's socket head around the nut of the guitar jack, push the Grip Tip into the jack (as you would your cable's ¼" tip), and turn the handle to twist the nut. I found the Grip Tip takes a fair bit of pressure to insert firmly into the jack opening, but, other than that, the Bullet tightened up recessed- and flush-mounted jacks quickly and securely on a number of basses and guitars in the office. It's small enough to fit into cases and gig bags so that it's always at hand—although the yang of that yin is that its diminutive size means it's just itching to be misplaced. —MICHAEL MOLENDAA

ZYMÖL

GBCB, GBC# & BRIDGE

Street \$20 each

Contact zymolmusic.com

Think of it as a mani-pedi or a spa day for your beloved bass. As OCD as I can behave in some facets of my life, I've never been one to fastidiously buff and polish my basses. Having just given one of my high-gloss quilted-maple-top 4-strings a proper polish, I may now have a new obsession. You might recognize Zymöl from its range of automotive polishes and cleaners, but the company also has a line dedicated to musicians. With two types of polish—GBCb for non-gloss and GBC# for high-gloss finishes—and a Bridge fingerboard cleaner, along with some lovely microfiber towels—Zymöl has what you need to make the bass look its best. The product is dead simple to use: just apply and buff. The result on my oil-finish Tobias Basic 5 was impressive, breathing new life into its open grain, and the Zymöl high-gloss polish restored a gloss-top Warwick to its original glory. On well-worn ebony and rosewood fingerboards, the Bridge fingerboard treatment helped in removing gunk without stripping off the funk, leaving my 'boards fresh, clean, and ready to rock. Bonus: The products smell lovely, with hints of mint and coconut, but they don't leave your bass smelling like a cotton candy scratch-and-sniff. —BF





D'ADDARIO

NS MICRO HEADSTOCK TUNER

Street \$22

Contact daddario.com

Headstock tuners are super handy, and they come in all shapes and sizes, but so many of them are clearly visible on your headstock—which, if you worry about such things, might mar the lines of a fine instrument, or, at worst, simply look dorky. Designed by Ned Steinberger, the NS Micro easily hides behind your headstock, and the reversible screen and 360-degree swivel offer unfettered viewing from almost any angle. The Micro's onboard piezo allows accurate tuning, and the LCD screen is very stable. I've used this tuner during soundchecks with drums pounding and low-end sound waves blasting from floor monitors and side fills, and I didn't have a single problem with screen stutters or significant latency between string pluck and tuning reading. This is quite simply an awesome and rather clandestine tuning tool. —MM



ERNIE BALL

POWERPEG PRO & MUSICIAN'S TOOL KIT

Street PowerPeg Pro, \$35; Musician's Tool Kit, \$40

Contact ernieball.com

Fishing through a rusty bucket of tools in your garage to find that one hex wrench that fits your bridge saddles is a drag—been there, done that. So Ernie Ball has packaged many of the tools you'd need to make setup tweaks in a single compact kit. With a 12-piece hex wrench set, a 6-way screwdriver combo tool with flat, Phillips, and nut driver attachments, a wire cutter/stripper, a pegwinder, a ruler, a polishing cloth, and Wonder Wipes string cleaners, the Musician's Tool Kit has everything you need to set up your bass to perfection.

Looking for a little more power in your tools? The PowerPeg Pro is a compact motorized string winder with wireless operation courtesy of its lithium-ion battery. The PowerPeg Pro's small head works great on small guitar gear pegs; it fits less snugly on large clover-leaf-type tuners, but it still makes light work of restringing a bass. —BF

HOSA

BEATPORT DJ SERIES BALANCED INTERCONNECT

Street \$14

Contact hosatech.com



These 1/4" TRS cables aren't just for DJs—although if you do double duty as a bassist/DJ, you can use the blue beauties to connect your audio interfaces and mixers to house systems or powered studio monitors that share the same jacks. For musicians and home-studio peeps, the three-foot length is perfect for keeping things connected and neat on pedalboards and desktops, and a ten-foot option is available for \$19 (street) if you want more length to connect to expression pedals—as we did with the Dunlop Volume (X) on page 51—or other audio gear. The Interconnect cables utilize oxygen-free copper conductors and gold-plated connector to ensure stout, crystalline, and clear signal reproduction. —MM

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www.epiphone.com/tobias



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DUNLOP

DVP3 VOLUME (X)

Street \$119

Contact jimdunlop.com

The full-featured Volume (X) doubles as an expression pedal and features a tuner out and a smooth-feeling rocker that can be easily tensioned to taste via a rear-mounted screw. An internal trim-pot lets you adjust the minimum setting for the parameter you are controlling with the EXP out, and you can even reverse the functions of the heel- or toe-down positions when using it as an expression pedal. The rubber-covered bottom plate has recessed screws for easy mounting to a pedalboard, and the Volume (X) looks fit for duty with its die-cast aluminum housing, ultra-strong rocker pivot, and patented Band Drive system that provides super-precise coupling of the rocker to the heavy-duty enclosed pot. A sweet deal for all that it offers! —ART THOMPSON

GRUV GEAR

DuoStrap Neo & Club Bag

Street DuoStrap Neo, \$80; Club Bag, \$200

Contact gruvgear.com

With products that range from heavy-duty gear carts to rasta-style FretWrap string mutes, Gruv Gear seeks to strike the delicate balance between ergonomics, utility, and style. The three come together in the company's new DuoStrap Neo and Club Bag offerings.

Fatigue and the risk of long-term nerve damage from extended hours of play is a serious issue for many bass players, and one that Gruv Gear took head-on when it developed its Duo Strap Signature with bassist Damian Erskine. The Signature strap distributes the weight of a bass across both shoulders via wide leather straps; Gruv Gear's new DuoStrap Neo is fashioned with neoprene pads and leather trim. Fitting the strap can be tricky—the standard tail strap is too short to fit big guys like myself, but Gruv Gear offers an extra-long extension for around \$10. The strap's ability to redistribute weight is priceless for players suffering neck and shoulder pain that often comes from long-term playing. The DuoStrap might require you to make some minor tweaks to the way you holding and play bass, but then again, that's precisely the point.

Plane, train, or automobile—however you get to gigs and rehearsals, Gruv Gear's Club Bag is designed to make it less of a schlep. Design features like a TSA-approved laptop sleeve, breathable mesh back pads and straps, and a built-in loop for sliding over the handle of roller bags and luggage carts make it a jet-setter's best friend, and features like a headphone strap and removable shelves for cables, pedals, etc., make it the ultimate gig bag. With thoughtfully designed storage for everything from digital gadgets to tools and merch, the Club Bag is a musician-minded pack that has both form and function in spades. —BF



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GLENN HUGHES



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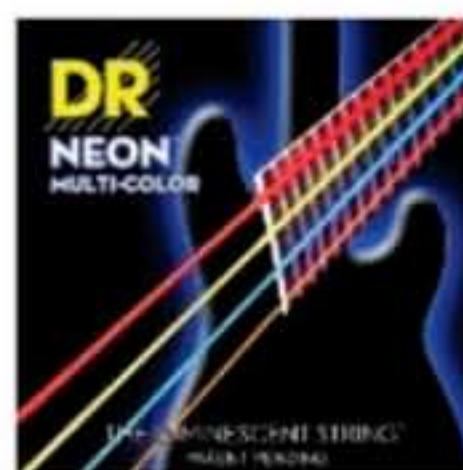
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drstrings.com



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GODLYKE PA-9 Power-All

Digital power supply for effects pedals.
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Effects go by many names and come in many flavors. We know that putting a guitar stompbox in a different colored case does not a bass pedal make. Bass players deserve pedals specifically designed for their frequency spectrum. Vintage pedals have their place, but finding that sweet spot isn't always so easy. You have to deal with noise, signal loss, and tones that can change with battery life or when things heat up on stage. Some of those old Germanium-powered effects are more sensitive than a train-car full of nitro.

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AER Bottom Line Series

Amp One, Amp Two & Amp Three

BY ED FRIEDLAND

OVER THE PAST TEN-PLUS YEARS, A BIG TREND IN BASS amplification has been smaller, lighter, and louder. And while small amps with big sonic footprints are now commonplace, AER's new Bottom Line electric bass amp lineup hits a new low (in the way we bass players love), bringing the micro-rig into the realm of big bottom. The German company made its mark with tiny acoustic guitar amps that boast high volume levels and pure acoustic tone, and while AER's Basic Performer and Bass Cube 2 models have attracted fans in the upright bass world, the new Bottom Line Amps One, Two and Three are specifically designed for electric bassists.

All three models share the same 200-watt analog power amp, which may initially seem tame compared to some of its 600-plus-watt Class D competitors. But with its high drive reserves and discrete bipolar transistor output, the AER gives a stout and hearty response to low notes. The controls are identical on all three amps, with the exception of the compressor circuit being placed pre-EQ on Amp Two. The AER has a 1M Ω input with a switchable -10dB pad,

with a GAIN control and clip indicator LED to help you set optimal input levels. The mute function can be assigned to a footswitch, or it can trade that convenience to the effect loop. The COLOUR switch dramatically changes the amp's basic character from vintage to modern with a -1dB cut at 360Hz and +14dB boost at 3.8kHz. The BASS knob gives you a healthy ± 10 dB centered at 80Hz, but there is even more girth available with the additional +10dB @ 55Hz BASS BOOST switch. The MIDDLE knob sweeps from 200Hz to 2kHz with ± 15 dB boost/cut, and the bandwidth selects between 0.6 or 1.6 octave for broader or more precise midrange control. The TREBLE control offers ± 12 dB @ 6kHz, but there are ways to access even more high end if you want it.



Following the EQ, we have the BALANCE control that sweeps from a low boost (left) to a balance between lows and highs (center), to a high boost (right). The INTENSITY knob controls the degree to which these EQ profiles get mixed in parallel with the original signal, giving you yet another way to globally affect the amp's character, and help tailor the response for different environments. The AER compressor circuit's THRESHOLD and RATIO knobs offer enough control to lightly squeeze or squash the heck out of the signal, but even when bypassed, the AER's low-distortion RMS limiter will step in to save the speakers if needed. Around back, the AER sports a deluxe feature set with selectable pre/post EQ DI output with level control, stereo aux input with level control, tuner out, pre- and post-EQ inserts, a parallel effect loop, a sub out for connecting an active subwoofer, headphone and line outs, and a ground lift.

The Amp One model is the smallest of the trio, with a single 10" neodymium driver, while Amp Two is the largest, with a 12" neo woofer and a 4" mid-high speaker—rated at 240 watts, it also has a slight power advantage. Amp Three is the newest in the lineup, with two 8" neo speakers. All three amps employ a bass reflex cabinet design, and are built from 13-ply birch plywood with extra bracing to ensure a stiff enclosure, which aids low frequency reproduction. The cabs' overall low-end efficiency is greatly enhanced by a subsonic filter that starts a 12dB per octave slope at 35Hz. The absence of a tweeter may surprise some, but there is no lack of high end. The cabs have a durable acrylic finish, and each model comes with a well-fitted canvas cover.

PHYSICAL LOUDNESS

As a large percentage of my gig schedule gets

S SPECIFICATIONS

AMP ONE, AMP TWO & AMP THREE

Street Amp One: \$1,800, Amp Two: \$2,300, Amp Three: \$2,000

Pros Great low-end response, versatile, accurate, highly favorable size-to-performance ratio.

Cons Size-to-dollar ratio may cause sticker shock.

Inputs One 1/4" input (1M Ω), stereo 1/4" aux in with level control, footswitch (assignable to mute or effect loop), 1/4" effect return, pre and post EQ TRS inserts
Outputs XLR balanced line out with level (pre/post-EQ), 1/4" stereo headphone out, 1/4" tuner out, 1/4" effect send, 1/4" sub out, 1/4" line out

Controls -10dB INPUT PAD, GAIN, MUTE, COLOUR, BASS, BASS BOOST, MIDDLE, FREQ, BANDWIDTH, TREBLE, TONE BALANCE, INTENSITY, compressor THRESHOLD, RATIO, MASTER

Power 200-240 watts @ 8 Ω , analog

Speakers Amp One, 10" neodymium driver; Amp Two, 12" neo woofer + 4" mid-high speaker; Amp Three, two 8" neodymium drivers

Dimensions Amp One, 12.8" H x 14.8" W x 11.6" D; Amp Two, 19.7" H x 16.5" W x 13.8" D; Amp Three, 14.7" H x 16.5" W x 11.8" D

Weight Amp One, 29.8 lbs; Amp Two, 51.7 lbs; Amp Three, 35.3 lbs



handled by micro-rigs, I am very familiar with the genre, and I'd say my expectations are fairly realistic. But my first 15 seconds with Amp One were eye opening—I would characterize my initial reaction as shock. The first blast of low end caught me by surprise, and even after multiple gigs, it still gets me. While the output is louder than you'd expect, the well-formed and highly pronounced low-end impact is what blew me away—it was a physical thing. As a reviewer, my typical first move is to push the amp to the limit, and each of these amps seemed to take the challenge in stride. Past a certain level, the built-in limiter steps in, but even with the audible limiting, the attack is not obscured, and the tone is clear. I don't know if I'd want to play this way all night, but it's nice to know that even in protection mode, the amp still sounds good.

Having this much low end at your disposal from such a small package is addictive, but it also forces you to think about the big picture of your EQ scheme. The AER has a well-balanced tone with the EQ set flat, which allows for more level without activating the limiter. But as the EQ section offers more gain than would be practical to use, care must be taken—in fact, you may be able to get your tone simply using the COLOUR switch, TONE BALANCE, and BASS BOOST.

LIVE AUTHORITY

For live testing, I took out Amp One for a laid-back country gig at an old general store, and while I couldn't even begin to access its abundant power, I could rattle the rafters with the low end. I dialed in an appropriate level, but was able to fill out the bottom thoroughly without losing definition. Amp Two came out to a four-piece acoustic country/rock gig at an indoor venue, and once again, the amp was overkill. I could barely open it up without getting "the look" from the soundman. The tone was stellar, and the amp stayed well within its comfort zone. As an experiment, I took Amp Three to an outdoor gig with the electric version of the same band. Set up in a gazebo, I placed Amp Three in front of my usual 2x12 stack, as I didn't expect it to stand up against two 35-watt guitar amps and drums in the great wide open. I was dumbfounded to hear a firm, punchy bass tone come through, holding its place in the mix. I played two full songs with the amp, and no one in the band noticed anything different. When I pointed out the amp that produced that sound—well, shock is once again an applicable term. I chose not to play the rest of the night through the amp, but I have no reason to believe it couldn't have hung with that level all night long.

At home, I explored the amps' tonal range, and found that the cabs do provide enough snap for slap style—albeit not the scalpel-like high end you would expect from a tweeter. I set the COLOUR switch on, BASS BOOST on, the BASS knob flat at 12:00, applied a mid cut around 1.5kHz, set the TREBLE knob at 2:00, and rolled the TONE BALANCE control to 3:00 with INTENSITY on

full, and produced a righteous slap tone with my Lull MV5—and the B string was represented with authority. Being an inherently "peaky" style of playing, the slap workout also helped me understand the one difference between the trio of amps: Amp Two places the compression circuit right after the MUTE switch, before the signal hits the EQ, while One and Three have the compression placed post-EQ, between the TONE BALANCE and MASTER controls. For a rig of this size, I like the earlier placement of the compression as it sends the EQ section a dynamically tailored signal, providing more headroom—and the limiter still operates independently, placed before the power amp. This feature, along with the larger enclosure, two-way speakers, and extra 40 watts, make Amp Two the heaviest hitter of the three, but it would be interesting to see how this compression placement might benefit the smaller models, too.

UPRIGHT & MORE

As AER founded its reputation with acoustic-specific amplification, I plugged my upright basses in for a test drive and found they worked equally well. The high-impedance input matched up perfectly with my Gage Realist pickup, with no buffer preamp necessary. My carved Juzek bass with Zyex strings sounded best to me through Amp Three. Placed on the floor, it gave me massive low end, but with enough mid and high presence to avoid getting muddy. On jazz gigs I often place my amp on a chair to get it closer to ear level—which forfeits some low end in the name of intonation. But using the BASS BOOST, I elevated the amp while retaining the kind of depth you associate with the cab coupling with the floor. My gut-strung Blast Cult one4five's bridge pickup (Channel Blaster) did not fare well direct into the amp, but as the bass also has a fingerboard transducer, I always use an outboard two-channel preamp, anyway. For slap-style upright, Amp Two was my preference, as the mid-high speaker gave more natural cut to the pluck, and the forward compression placement went a long way toward helping the amp handle the intense volume spikes created by the "un-gentle art." After much tone tweaking, I found having the COLOUR switch on, BASS set flat, BASS BOOST off, MIDDLE rolled completely off with the FREQUENCY set at 3:00 (wide bandwidth), TREBLE at 3:00, and the TONE BALANCE rolled all the way toward the dark end produced a full, natural, rootsy upright tone that scooped away most of the offensive mids, with a pleasant click on top.

Of course, being designed and built in Germany, these amps are not cheap. With street prices ranging from \$1,800 to \$2,300, some sticker shock is typical, but perhaps the size-to-dollar ratio triggers an extra degree of angst. However, these amps are true professional-grade equipment, able to handle a much wider range of circumstances than their small stature might suggest. Within their size/power category, you would be hard pressed to find an amp that delivers this much bottom, offers so much versatility, and sounds this good. **BP**

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TECHBENCH

"Hey man, check out this
'54 two-tone sunburst
I just stripped, man! I think
I'm gonna put a DiMarzio J
pickup right here, man!"



MOD SQUAD

Sins Of The Fathers

BY ED FRIEDLAND

BASSISTS OF MY GENERATION AND OLDER

remember a time when the vintage instruments we currently treasure were just *basses*—we even thought some of them needed a little work to be playable. Super-high volume levels, heavy effects use, and techniques like slapping changed the demands we placed on our instruments, so we modded them. When you see an ad for a \$1,200 genuine 1966 Fender Precision, odds are it was a “lab rat” for a well-meaning Boomer like myself. Maybe it was the climate of experimentation, the eternal quest for the ultimate, or perhaps it was the “rarefied air” of the times; regardless, the victims remain, many beyond hope. But it’s not all bad news. Even though these not-yet-treasures were sacrificed to the volcano, they fueled the evolution of the instrument.

In a sense, the electric bass invited hot-rodding from the very start. As performance volume levels increased (due partly to the instrument itself), players of the bass guitar looked for ways to improve its function. When the original single-coil pickup from the 1951 Precision was modified in 1957 to the split-coil version we use today, the goals were better tone and higher volume—the driving force behind most bass developments. Around 1969, Alembic changed the game with active electronics, exotic woods, and high-end lutherie, but due to the premium price point, many of us simply tried to “Alembicize” our Fenders. The industry also took notice: When examining each of Leo Fender’s successive instrument designs at Music Man and G&L, you might imagine he was paying attention to the way people modified his earlier work. Each revision of his bass guitar reflected the new developments and contributed a few of their own. Other new brands came about that used these new ideas as their starting point.

Let’s take a step back in time and set up a typical scenario: It’s 1979, and you’ve just bought a used 1966 Fender P-Bass. As it’s only 13 years old (not even “Pre-CBS”) and you’re only 20, its future value is not a consideration. Fender’s 1970 introduction of the natural finish on ash bodies was no doubt a response to all the basses that lost their pigment to a can of Zip Strip in the late ’60s—and so, we have. . . .

STEP 1: GO NATURAL

Ah yes, a classic D.I.Y. that often produces sloppy results and prolonged exposure to noxious fumes (coincidence?). Of course, to strip off the finish you’ll have to take the bass apart, which means you’ll have to put it back together (make sure you remember where the wires go, dude). Today, information on how to refinish an instrument is a few clicks away, but back then it was often a spontaneous decision carried out with no guidance (*à la* Tommy Chong): “Hey man, like, I bet this custom-color sea-foam green ’66 P-Bass would look far out if I stripped it natural, man! Wow, man, I better strip the headstock, too. . . .” An oil finish is a smart way to go if you’re doing this job; applying many coats of oil to a well-prepped body is feasible, but correctly spraying lacquer or nitro is beyond the average person’s capabilities (not to say some of us didn’t try). And then of course, a can of spray paint often seemed like a good idea. Since the bass is apart already, and the finish is sort of dry, what else can we do?

STEP 2: HIGH MASS BRIDGE

Back in 1979, you were most likely to put on a Leo Quan Badass bridge. The original Badass required routing the body to seat the bridge into the wood. The higher mass and greater coupling with

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TECH BENCH

the wood helped sustain, but it was basically a non-reversible mod (though some restorations have been successful). For the do-it-yourselfer, it was another invitation to disaster with the router—or, worst-case scenario, a chisel! The Badass II, which requires no routing or drilling, was the most likely candidate back in the stone ages.

STEP 3: BRASS NUT

I haven't discussed this mod earlier, as it has lost its mass appeal, but in 1979? Hell yes! A brass nut increases sustain to a point, but mostly it gives the open strings a tone more similar to fretted notes. This was a mod most of us brought to a professional. Good news: It's reversible.

STEP 4: P/J!

Well, who doesn't want “the best of both worlds”? Having a J pickup cut into a P-Bass can definitely add to its capabilities, but if we knew back then how we were destroying the value of our instruments, would we have still done it? This mod also had a pretty steep learning curve; sometimes the results turned out great, but many basses were ruined more than once. In some cases, we simply chose to replace the existing pickup with another brand. You'll see a lot of old modded basses with the DiMarzio Model P pickup, and mods from the '80s with EMGs and Bartolinis.

STEP 5: REWIRING

Sooner or later, messing with the wiring was inevitable: Even with a single split-coil-pickup P-Bass, you could still install a series/parallel switch to drastically change the instrument's character. The two coils are wired together in series mode, meaning one coil feeds into the other. Switching them to parallel creates a bit of a volume drop, but it also scoops out a little mid-range—not necessarily better or worse, just different. Where this mod really makes sense is in the P/J configuration, where the P pickup wired in parallel blends a little better with the J pickup. This was also a common mod on J-Basses, and at some point Fender tried to implement this feature on both models with its ill-fated S-1 switch. Another classic mod, thankfully long forgotten, is the phase switch. When you have two coils, you can reverse their phase relationship, creating one of the most useless, sackless, nasal tones imaginable! And yet, we did that. No one really knows why.

STEP 6: GO ACTIVE

Although Alembic and Music Man were building active basses, aftermarket preamps were few and far between in those days, Stars Guitars built an early onboard

preamp, famously installed in Marcus Miller's Jazz Bass by Roger Sadowsky. The increased output and tone control gave the J a new voice, but it often required major routing. Soon after, EMG and Bartolini began offering a wide variety of active pickups and preamps, and were eventually joined by many other companies.

STEP 7: NECK MODS

This could mean converting the bass to fretless, but it was not unheard of for people to take a big P-Bass neck and narrow it to a Jazz width. While I've never done this myself, I have owned several basses that had the neck narrowed. To do this, the frets had to be pulled, and the neck reshaped by a luthier. Sometimes it turned out great; other times, not so much.

STEP 8: POTS MODS

This step often occurred when adding new pickups, a preamp, or changing other aspects of the wiring. The old pots were probably fine, but new ones are better, right? Maybe—except we never imagined that the original pots (even the original solder joints) could one day increase the value of a vintage instrument.

IT'S ALIVE!

Taking in the totality of our handiwork, what we end up with is: A 1966 Precision Bass stripped to a natural finish, with a Badass bridge, brass nut, Dimarzio P/J pickups (white covers, of course), series/parallel switch, phase switch (you know you want it!), Bartolini preamp (requiring much routing under the pickguard, a battery compartment, and a side-mounted input jack), swapped-out pots, and a shaved-down Jazz-width fretless neck. If left original, the bass could fetch \$5,000 to \$12,000 depending on condition and color. After these mods however, you might get \$1,750 to \$3,000 depending on condition and the buyer's gullibility.

When looked at in purely economic terms, we screwed up—but our intentions were good. And while you will know us from the trail of dead collector's items we left behind, we did in fact do the bass world a favor. The later work of Leo Fender crystalized many of these experimental ideas into a reliable, affordable production-line instrument; Roger Sadowsky forged the premium modified Fender-style instrument platform we all love today; and virtually every Fender-style instrument on the market can trace some of its features back to the “mod years.” No longer do you have to ruin a perfectly good bass guitar to get what you want; you can just buy it that way. You're welcome. However, if you are currently in possession of an original 1966 P-Bass and are thinking of trying any of this—stop. Put it down, step away from the bass, and get some help! **BP**



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WOODSHED SHEET



BLUES YOU CAN USE



Willie Dixon **Willie B. Goode**

BY ED FRIEDLAND

WITH BP HONORING WILLIE DIXON WITH A POSTHUMOUS LIFETIME

Achievement Award at this year's BASS PLAYER LIVE!, I've been inspired to learn more about his vast contributions to popular music. Mr. Dixon penned some of the most covered songs in blues and rock: "Spoonful," "Hoochie-Coochie Man," "I Just Want to Make Love to You," "My Babe," and more than a few Led Zeppelin tunes, to start. As a staff writer, arranger, producer, and session player for Chess Records, Dixon had his hand in some of the most influential music ever recorded by Muddy Waters, Otis Rush, Howlin' Wolf, Bo Diddley, Little Walter, Koko Taylor, and many other blues artists. This month's example is culled from what is perhaps the most iconic guitar song in rock & roll history: Chuck Berry's original recording of "Johnny B. Goode."

As an aspiring 12-year-old guitar player, I spent countless hours in the hypnotic grip of that track, trying to decode its secrets. Little did I know that 42 years later, I would once again dive into the deep end of rock's gene pool, only to find the beguiling, revolutionary, and highly athletic bass playing of Willie Dixon. I think it's a safe assumption that we've all heard this record, but listen hard to the bass line—it's a little buried due to the technology of the time, but from his first entrance on the IV chord, Willie is up and running. Dissecting the song's rhythmic guts, we see a cross-referencing of several popular styles of the time. The lead guitar

i INFO

ED FRIEDLAND

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LISTEN



Chuck Berry, *Chuck Berry Is on Top* [Chess, 1959]

“chucking” the root-5/root-6 pattern with an even eighth-note rhythm is what we now distinguish as the “rock” element of the song, but the drums are playing a jump-blues swinging shuffle feel. While you could say the two parts go against each other’s grain, it helped create the rhythmic tension that embodied rock & roll. The pianist Johnny Johnson is playing a blues shuffle style, with lots of accelerating right-hand triplets bursting through the mix, and then along comes Willie Dixon playing double-time runs underneath everything.

The upright bass is a highly physical instrument, particularly when played sans amplification, with gut strings and high action. But Willie Dixon was a big man, and the former boxer slapped the upright bass into submission, plucking the strings like rubber bands on a cigar-box guitar. You can clearly hear his muscular approach, phenomenal rhythm, jaw-dropping slap chops, and hearty tone on "Joggie Boogie" from *Songs of Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon* [Folkways, 1960], a tour de force that has raised many a blister. In this performance, you hear double-time bursts as a part of Willie's solo, but to use that as a bass line underneath Chuck Berry's guitar was odd, though not accidental. A fly on the wall might have overheard

this: "Hey Willie, this ain't blues, it's rock & roll, man—play something crazy!" As seemingly out of place as this approach may be by today's standard, there were no templates or precedents for this music—only the notion to do something different. But in Dixon's lines, there are echoes of Jimmy Blanton's playing on "Jack the Bear" or "Sepia Panorama," and coupled with a swinging jump beat, they make perfect sense.

Example 1 is as close as I could get to the bass line played under the second verse, as some of the notes were obscured. Using my secret weapon, Amazing Slow Downer (ronimusic.com), I was able to pinpoint his lines by slowing the tempo and listening up one octave. While that is similar to listening to Alvin & the Chipmunks on LSD (either you or them), for the good of science, I'd do it again.

In this verse, Willie alternates between “running” and walking over the straightforward B♭ blues progression, starting each four-bar phrase with a double-time romp. Bar 1’s figure is a classic major-scale run to the 5th with a quick octave drop that starts a walk back up to the root. He finishes the phrase with textbook boogie lines on the I chord. In bars 5 and 6, Willie lights a fire under the IV chord with a double-time arpeggio

and a three-against-four pattern that would get a lesser man fired from the gig. Again, he settles into a walk to finish the phrase. While it is typical to create activity with a fill at the end of a four- or eight-bar phrase that releases to the next phrase's downbeat, this line oddly does the exact opposite. In bar 9, Willie starts his eighth-note run on the 3rd of the V chord and plays up to the ♭7, quickly dropping down to the root and working back up to the 3rd, playing the pattern in bar 10 to the octave, with the octave drop once again staging a return to the root of the I chord. Taking into account that this was played on an unamplified bass, at 170 BPM, it's not only a musical marvel—it's a feat of strength. The line has been tabbed out with the fingerings I found most useful on upright bass. We don't know exactly how he played this line, but this positioning takes good advantage of open strings as bounce points. If you're playing this on electric bass, you may want to use the palm-mute-and-thumb technique to get an upright-like vibe, and find optimal positioning for a fuller tone.

Next time, we'll look at some more of Willie Dixon's classic lines, certainly blues you can use! **BP**

EX. 1

♩ = 170

B $\flat$ 7

E $\flat$ 7

8 8 7 8 10 8 10 7 8 0 3 0 1 0 3 0 3 3 3 1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 3 3 0 1 0

7

B $\flat$ 7

F7

B $\flat$ 7

3 0 3 0 1 0 3 5 7 7 5 7 8 8 5 6 7 7 5 7 10 8 10 7 8 0 3 3 1 0 3 0



JAZZ CONCEPTS

New Bass Resolutions

BY JOHN GOLDSBY



HAPPY NEW YEAR! SINCE BASS PLAYER IS A full-service magazine, I've made a list of New Year's resolutions for you. Feel free to use any or all of these in the weeks and months to come, or make a new list filled with your own bass-playing goals and desires. Putting your goals on paper will help them come to life, and gives you a framework to tackle your bass program for the new year.

It's time to take charge of your bass playing and make resolutions about things you want to change for the better. You might decide to play the bass every day before you check your email, or leave for the gig 15 minutes earlier than you usually do, or learn one new tune every week. You choose what you want to improve, and then tailor your resolutions to target the precise areas of bass playing and musicianship that you need to change.

Revolutionary Resolutions

1. Be consistent with your practicing. It's much better to schedule daily practice time, rather than only practicing for one long session on Saturday. Where do you find 30 minutes extra in your jam-packed schedule? Take your bass to your day job and play during the lunch break. Replace some of your Facebook, television, and video-game time with bass playing. Get up 30 minutes earlier every day, and start your day playing the bass. Time, or lack of time, is not the problem. Time is everywhere! The fuel for getting things done is your desire and commitment.

2. Sight-read something every day. Sight-reading is a skill that can be practiced. Start with simple notated material, and work up to more challenging pieces: Pick up a church hymn book with four-part harmony and read the bass lines. Or, play through songs in a bass-clef fake book. Choose simple, vocal-style melodies and play through them slowly. Get a copy of the *Two-Part Inventions for Piano* by J.S. Bach. Read the bass-clef part. If you are brave, also read the treble-clef part. If you are a Jedi Master, record the bass-clef part and then overdub the treble-clef part. For jazzers: Use Jim Snidero's *Jazz Conception Series* for beginning,

intermediate, and advanced students [Advance Music; bassists: Paul Gill, Peter Washington, Dennis Irwin].

3. Memorize something musical every day. Make a list of songs you know, plus a list of songs you'd like to know by memory. Put together a playlist of the songs that you want to learn, and listen to them over and over. Once you have a song in your head, analyze the form and chord progression, either by using a chart, or by transcribing the bass part, melody, and chord progression. The process of memorizing music involves hearing how it should sound in your head, and then having the bass technique to realize the sound on your instrument.

4. Listen to music. You're a musician, right? Spend some of your time every day intently listening to music. Find music that you haven't heard before, or music that you know is classic or legendary. You should also revisit music that you know well, and revel in the sound. Why are certain players, tracks, or albums your favorites? YouTube is a great resource, but there's a difference between casually watching music videos and deeply listening to music. To fine-tune your listening chops, read the definitive *What to Listen For in Music* [Aaron Copland, Signet Classics]. One of America's greatest classical composers explains the elements of music found in all genres: melody, rhythm, harmony, and tone color.

5. Know your stuff. Improve your general musicianship with Paul Hindemith's *Elementary Training for Musicians* [Schott Music]. The book covers basic to very advanced exercises in pitch (intervals and melodies), rhythms, pitches with rhythms, and dictation exercises. Known for his contemporary approach to classical composition, Hindemith wrote several books on the subjects of composition, theory, and musicianship.

6. Go out and listen to other bassists play live. You might be pleasantly surprised by what your fellow bassists are throwin' down. We're all in this together. Give it up.

7. Compose some music. Keep a notebook with ideas for songs, melodies, vamps, rhythms. Add to the notebook

INFO

Visit John on the web at johngoldsby.com for sound samples, videos, and answers to all of your bass-related questions.

- Post your New Year's Bass Resolutions on the MusicPlayer LowDown Forum.
- Gregory Ciotti tells how to form good habits on his Sparring Mind blog.
- Marco Panascia and Dario Deidda show how to play Rhythm changes with two bassists. bassplayer.com/holiday2013

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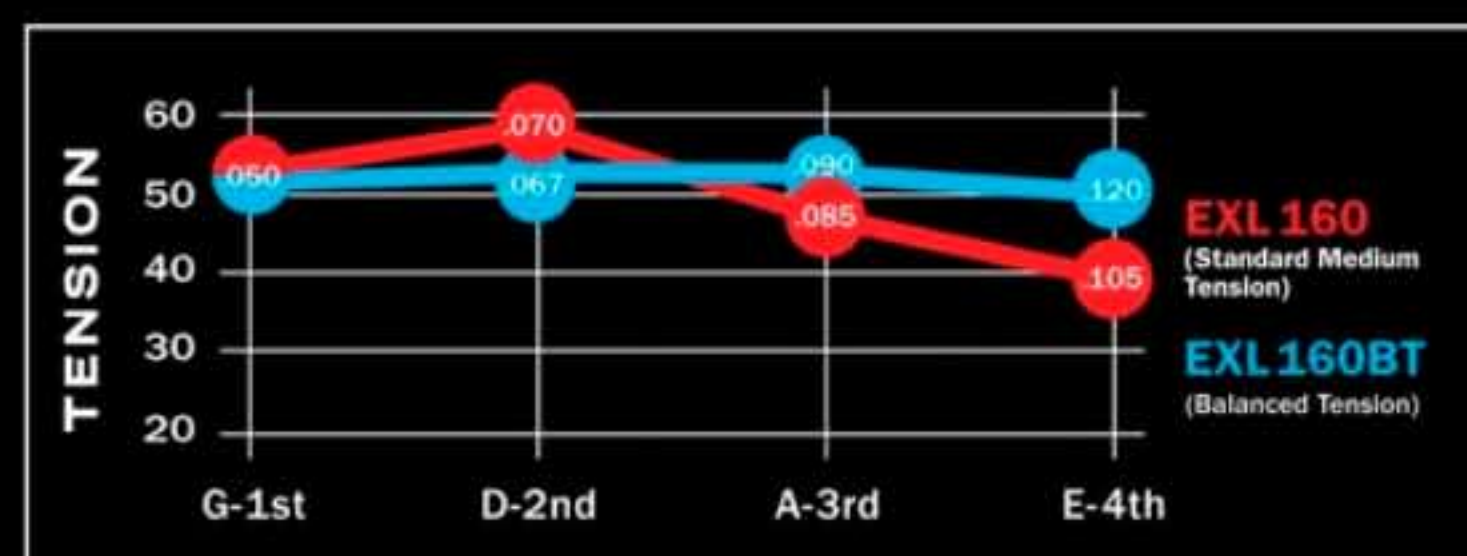


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every day. Just like learning to play the bass well, learning to write a decent bass line or song demands regular, daily practice. For an example of composing using a standard chord progression, check out the étude “Happy New Year” (Ex. 1), which is my solo line on the harmony to the Gershwin standard “I Got Rhythm,” also commonly called *Rhythm changes*.

8. Don't take my word on any of this! If you are a bassist who wants to play better, make your own list of New Year's Bass Resolutions. Your commitment to improve will bring you huge musical rewards for 2014 and beyond. **BP**

EX. 1

Med. bebop Swing eighths

B $\flat$ Bdim7 Cm7 C $\sharp$ dim7 B $\flat$ 6/D G7 $\flat$ 9 Cm7 F7 Fm7 B $\flat$ 7

6 E $\flat$ 7 Edim7 B $\flat$ 6/F G7 Cm7 F7 B $\flat$ 6 Bdim7 Cm7 C $\sharp$ dim7 Dm7 D $\flat$ m7

12 Cm7 Bmaj7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 6

17 D7 G7 C7

23 Faug7 B $\flat$ 6 Bdim7 Cm7 C $\sharp$ dim7 Dm7 C $\sharp$ dim7

28 Cm7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 7 Edim7 B $\flat$ 6 E7

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TRANSCRIPTION



“Christmas Time Is Here” By The Vince Guaraldi Trio

Fred Marshall's Complete Bass Line

BY BRIAN FOX

BY THE TIME HE WAS COMMISSIONED IN 1965 TO COM-pose the music for a television special of Charles Schultz' *Peanuts*, Vince Guaraldi had established himself as a premier Latin and jazz pianist in and around the San Francisco Bay area. Entering San Francisco's Fantasy Studios in September of that year with drummer Jerry Granelli and bassist Fred Marshall, Guaraldi would soon emerge with one of the biggest records of his career, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Born in Memphis, Tennessee on October 4, 1938, Guaraldi Trio bassist Fred Marshall was raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, and spent time in Kansas City before moving out to San Francisco. Working as the house bassist at Bop City, Marshall sharpened his bop chops with players including Dexter Gordon, Maynard Ferguson, Ben Webster, and Pharoah Sanders before joining Vince Guaraldi's trio in 1962. With the Trio, often augmented by Brazilian guitarist Bola Sete, Marshall tempered his bebop knowhow with profound respect for the cooler, calmer West Coast jazz tradition, and a

knack for nailing a spot-on bossa groove.

On “Christmas Time Is Here,” a tender tune in 3/4 time, Marshall is at his best, anchoring the Trio with big long tones under the head (Letters **A–B**) and Guaraldi's piano solo (Letters **C–D**) before taking a chorus of his own at Letter **E**. In support mode, Marshall keeps things swinging with frequent hints to the triplet beat subdivision suggested by Granelli (bars 7, 14, 15, etc.). When it comes time to solo, Marshall taps into his experience backing legends like Gordon and Ferguson, employing horn-like phrasing and toying with time by playing triplets galore.

This holiday season, take a time out from the hustle and bustle and dig deep into this Christmas classic. It's a gift that keeps on giving. **BP**



Vince Guaraldi



INFO

LISTEN

The Vince Guaraldi Trio, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* [Fantasy, 1965]

"Christmas Time Is Here" By The Vince Guaraldi Trio

Transcription by Brian Fox

♩ = 72

Fmaj7/C Fm7/C [A] Fmaj7 Eb13 Fmaj7 Eb13 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C

5 5 3 3 1 3 1 2 1 0 4 3

"Christmas Time Is Here" By Vince Guaraldi and Lee Mendelson. Copyright administered by Lee Mendelson Film Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



14 Fmaj9 Fmaj7 Eb13 Fmaj7 Eb13 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C Fmaj9

23 **B** Dbmaj7 Gbmaj7 Dbmaj7 Gbmaj7 F/A Eb7 D7 Gm7 C

31 Fmaj7 Eb7 Fmaj7 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C F

39 **C** Fmaj7 Eb7 Fmaj7 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C F

47 Fmaj7 Eb7 Fmaj7 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C F

55 **D** Dbmaj7 Gbmaj7 Dbmaj7 Gbmaj7 F Eb7 D7 Am Gm7 F C Fmaj7

Detailed musical notation for bass guitar, including staff notation, fret numbers, and chord symbols. The notation is organized into six systems, each with a key signature change (B, C, D) indicated by a box. The bass line is written in the bass clef, and the fret numbers are indicated below the staff. Chord symbols are placed above the staff.

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64 Eb7 Fmaj7 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C F Fmaj7 Eb7

73 Fmaj7 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7

77 Gm C F Fmaj7 Eb7 Fmaj7

Transcription of a bass line with chords and fingerings. The notation includes a bass staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The chords are: Eb7, Fmaj7, Eb7, Bm7b5, Bbm7, Am7, Abm7, Gm7, Gm7b5/C, F, Fmaj7, Eb7, Fmaj7, Eb7, Bm7b5, Bbm7, Am7, Abm7, Gm, C, F, Fmaj7, Eb7, Fmaj7. The fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 on the staff and letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, AA, AB, AC, AD, AE, AF, AG, AH, AI, AJ, AK, AL, AM, AN, AO, AP, AQ, AR, AS, AT, AU, AV, AW, AX, AY, AZ, BA, BB, BC, BD, BE, BF, BG, BH, BI, BJ, BK, BL, BM, BN, BO, BP, BQ, BR, BS, BT, BU, BV, BW, BX, BY, BZ, CA, CB, CC, CD, CE, CF, CG, CH, CI, CJ, CK, CL, CM, CN, CO, CP, CQ, CR, CS, CT, CU, CV, CW, CX, CY, CZ, DA, DB, DC, DD, DE, DF, DG, DH, DI, DJ, DK, DL, DM, DN, DO, DP, DQ, DR, DS, DT, DU, DV, DW, DX, DY, DZ, EA, EB, EC, ED, EE, EF, EG, EH, EI, EJ, EK, EL, EM, EN, EO, EP, EQ, ER, ES, ET, EU, EV, EW, EX, EY, EZ, FA, FB, FC, FD, FE, FF, FG, FH, FI, FJ, FK, FL, FM, FN, FO, FP, FQ, FR, FS, FT, FU, FV, FW, FX, FY, FZ, GA, GB, GC, GD, GE, GF, GG, GH, GI, GJ, GK, GL, GM, GN, GO, GP, GQ, GR, GS, GT, GU, GV, GW, GX, GY, GZ, HA, HB, HC, HD, HE, HF, HG, HH, HI, HJ, HK, HL, HM, HN, HO, HP, HQ, HR, HS, HT, HU, HV, HW, HX, HY, HZ, IA, IB, IC, ID, IE, IF, IG, IH, II, IJ, IK, IL, IM, IN, IO, IP, IQ, IR, IS, IT, IU, IV, IW, IX, IY, IZ, JA, JB, JC, JD, JE, JF, JG, JH, JI, JJ, JK, JL, JM, JN, JO, JP, JQ, JR, JS, JT, JU, JV, JW, JX, JY, JZ, KA, KB, KC, KD, KE, KF, KG, KH, KI, KJ, KK, KL, KM, KN, KO, KP, KQ, KR, KS, KT, KU, KV, KW, KX, KY, KZ, LA, LB, LC, LD, LE, LF, LG, LH, LI, LJ, LK, LL, LM, LN, LO, LP, LQ, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, LW, LX, LY, LZ, MA, MB, MC, MD, ME, MF, MG, MH, MI, MJ, MK, ML, MM, MN, MO, MP, MQ, MR, MS, MT, MU, MV, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NB, NC, ND, NE, NF, NG, NH, NI, NJ, NK, NL, NM, NN, NO, NP, NQ, NR, NS, NT, NU, NV, NW, NX, NY, NZ, OA, OB, OC, OD, OE, OF, OG, OH, OI, OJ, OK, OL, OM, ON, OO, OP, OQ, OR, OS, OT, OU, OV, OW, OX, OY, OZ, PA, PB, PC, PD, PE, PF, PG, PH, PI, PJ, PK, PL, PM, PN, PO, PP, PQ, PR, PS, PT, PU, PV, PW, PX, PY, PZ, QA, QB, QC, QD, QE, QF, QG, QH, QI, QJ, QK, QL, QM, QN, QO, QP, QQ, QR, QS, QT, QU, QV, QW, QX, QY, QZ, RA, RB, RC, RD, RE, RF, RG, RH, RI, RJ, RK, RL, RM, RN, RO, RP, RQ, RR, RS, RT, RU, RV, RW, RX, RY, RZ, SA, SB, SC, SD, SE, SF, SG, SH, SI, SJ, SK, SL, SM, SN, SO, SP, SQ, SR, SS, ST, SU, SV, SW, SX, SY, SZ, TA, TB, TC, TD, TE, TF, TG, TH, TI, TJ, TK, TL, TM, TN, TO, TP, TQ, TR, TS, TT, TU, TV, TW, TX, TY, TZ, UA, UB, UC, UD, UE, UF, UG, UH, UI, UJ, UK, UL, UM, UN, UO, UP, UQ, UR, US, UT, UU, UV, UW, UX, UY, UZ, VA, VB, VC, VD, VE, VF, VG, VH, VI, VJ, VK, VL, VM, VN, VO, VP, VQ, VR, VS, VT, VU, VV, VW, VX, VY, VZ, WA, WB, WC, WD, WE, WF, WG, WH, WI, WJ, WK, WL, WM, WN, WO, WP, WQ, WR, WS, WT, WU, WV, WW, WX, WY, WZ, XA, XB, XC, XD, XE, XF, XG, XH, XI, XJ, XK, XL, XM, XN, XO, XP, XQ, XR, XS, XT, XU, XV, XW, XX, XY, XZ, YA, YB, YC, YD, YE, YF, YG, YH, YI, YJ, YK, YL, YM, YN, YO, YP, YQ, YR, YS, YT, YU, YV, YW, YX, YY, YZ, ZA, ZB, ZC, ZD, ZE, ZF, ZG, ZH, ZI, ZJ, ZK, ZL, ZM, ZN, ZO, ZP, ZQ, ZR, ZS, ZT, ZU, ZV, ZW, ZX, ZY, ZZ.

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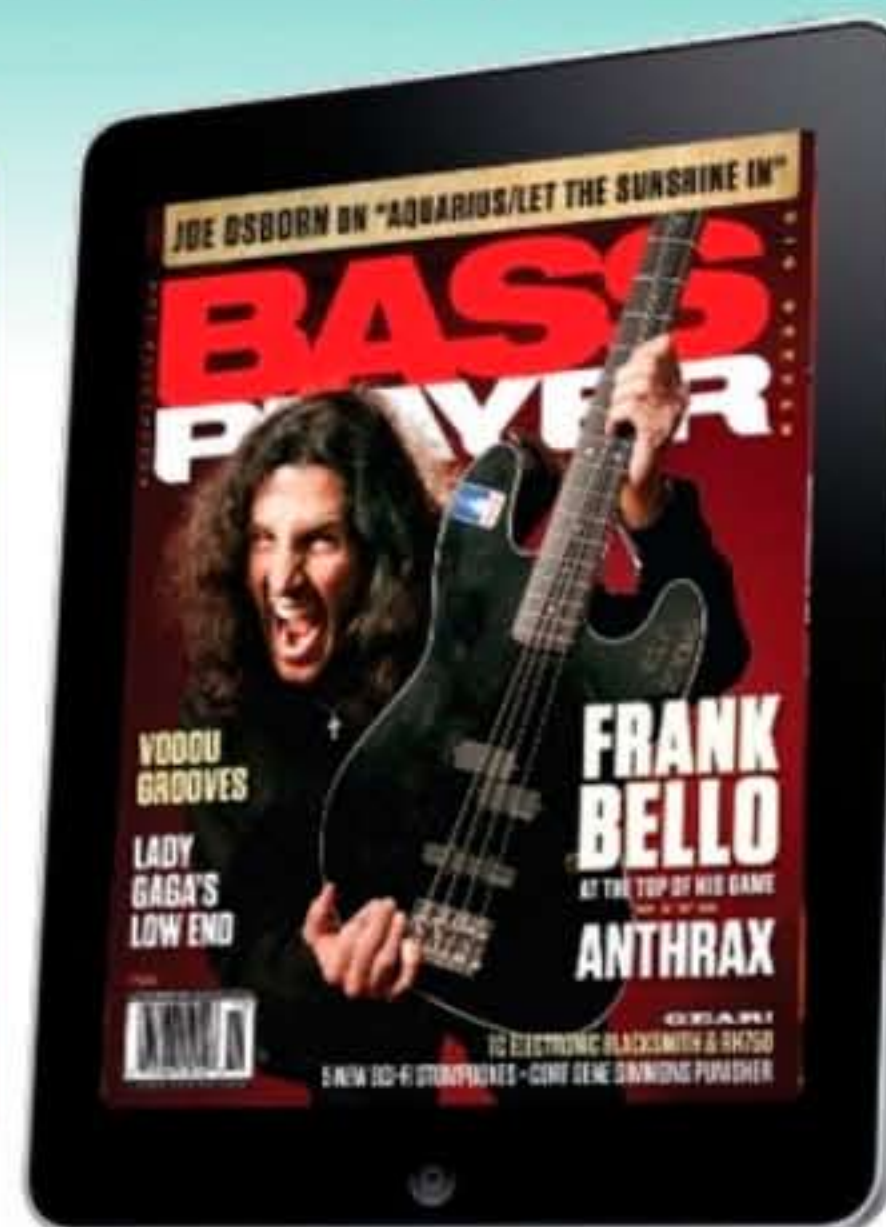
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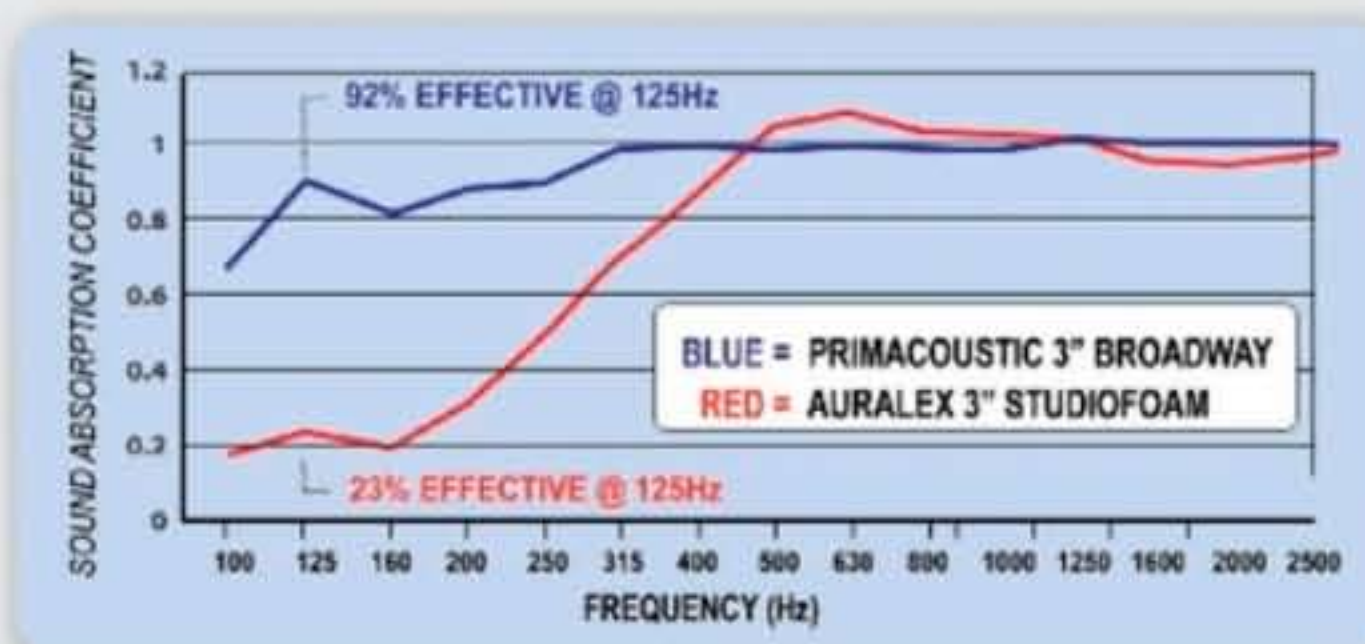
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82 Eb7 Bm7b5 Bbm7 Am7 Abm7 Gm7 Gm7b5/C F

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101 Gm C F G $Fmaj7$ $E\flat 7$ $Fmaj7$ $E\flat 7$ $Bm7\flat 5$ $B\flat m7$ $Am7$ $A\flat m7$ $Gm7$ $Gm7\flat 5/C$

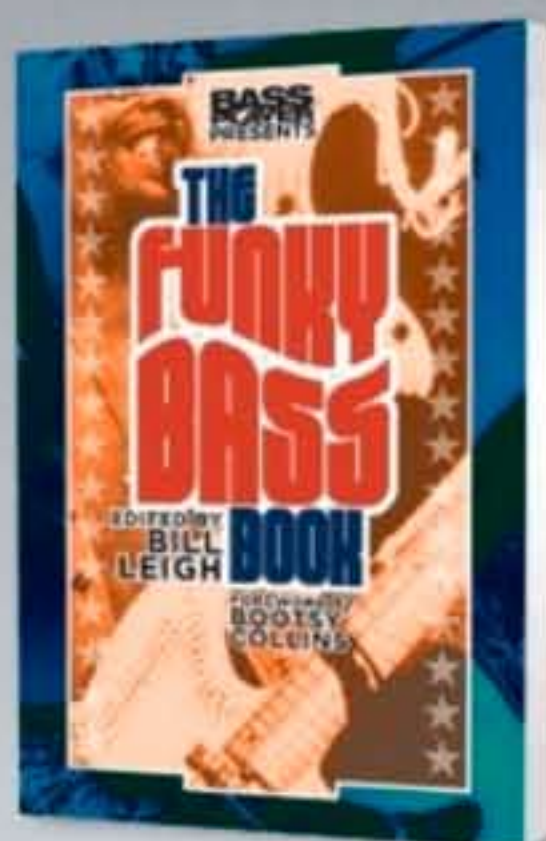
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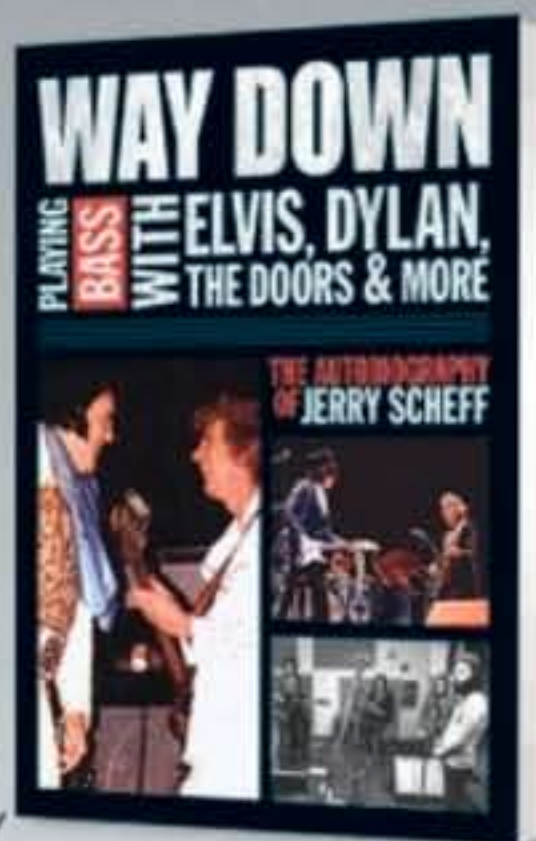
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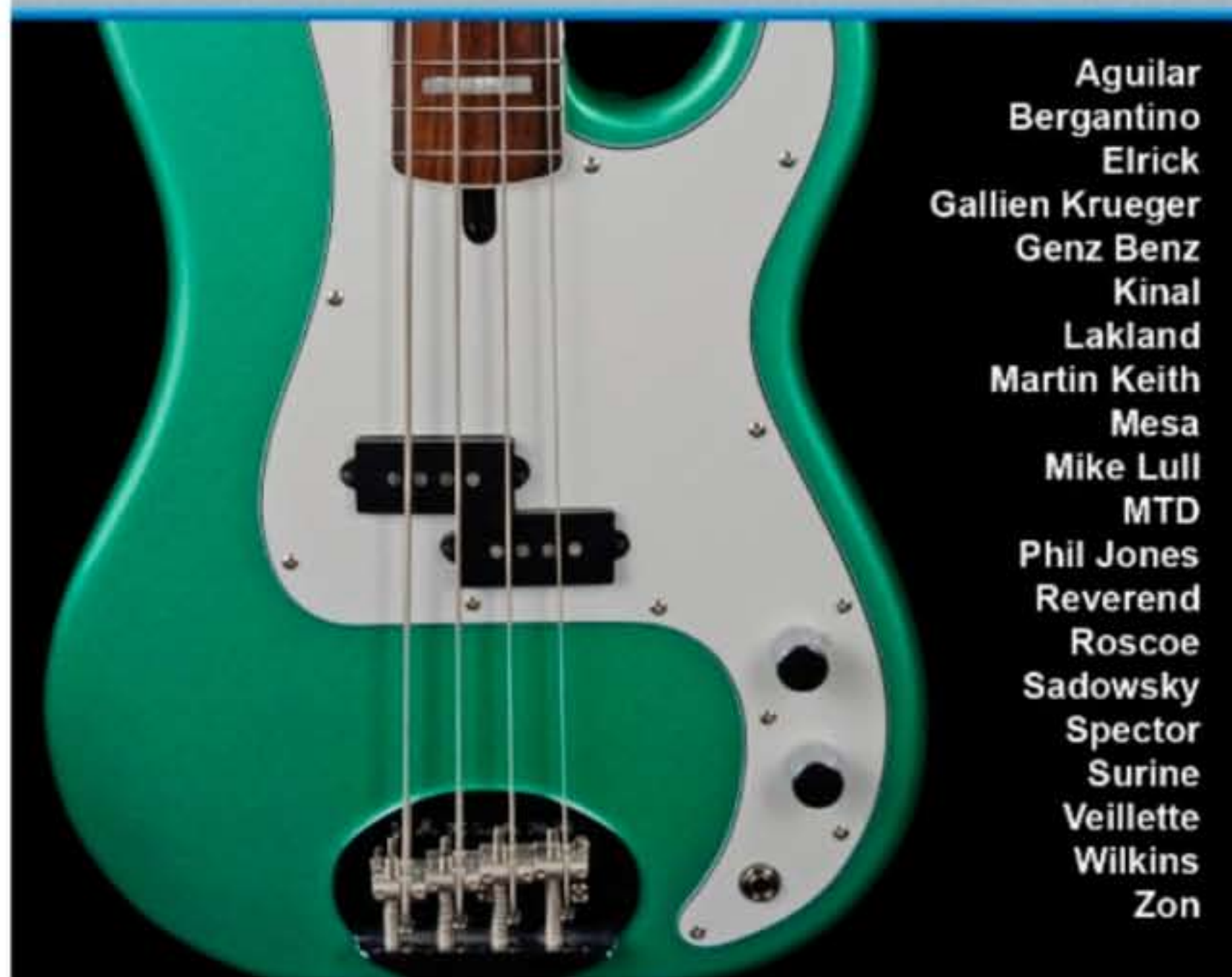


119 **H** D $\flat$ maj7 G $\flat$ maj7 D $\flat$ maj7 G $\flat$ maj7 F E $\flat$ 7 D7 Am Gm7 F C Fmaj7

128 E $\flat$ 7 Fmaj7 E $\flat$ 7 Bm7 $\flat$ 5 B $\flat$ m7 Am7 A $\flat$ m7 Gm7 Gm7 $\flat$ 5/C

134 Fmaj7/C Fm7/C Fmaj7/C F/C 4x Fmaj7/C Fm7/C Fmaj7/C

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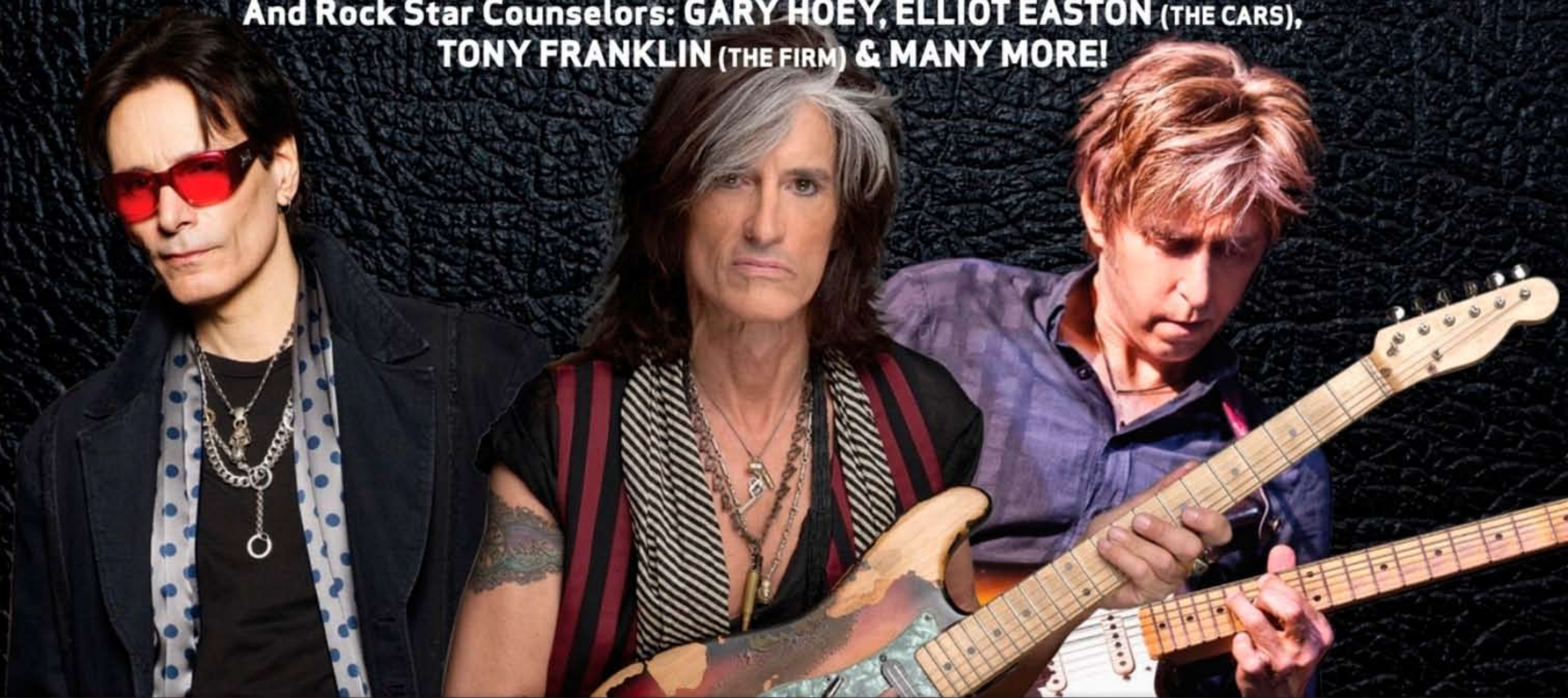
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Bobby Vega is a world-class collector and vintage bass freak of the first order. The gear is real. The stories are true. The dates are foggy. And the names of the innocent have been changed to protect their identities... and save Bobby's ass!



PAUL MAGGARD

Pride & Passion

IF EVERY BASS HAS A STORY, BOBBY VEGA'S

got a lot of stories. Somewhere between 50 or 60, in fact. On a journey that began with a \$52.95 Norma bass his mother bought for him from Montgomery Ward when he was in sixth grade, Bobby has put the bottom under a long list of icons, including Sly Stone, Joan Baez, Etta James, Billy Preston, Tower of Power, Santana, Mickey Hart, and Bo Diddley. Along the way, he has amassed an enviable collection of first-rate instruments, amps, and effects, including rooms of stuff that hasn't been made since the '60s and Fenders from every decade since the '50s.

How'd this happen? It'd be totally reasonable to assume that Bobby, a San Francisco native who turned 11 a few months after the Summer of Love, got hooked on gear after seeing life-changing shows at places like the Fillmore, Winterland, and the Avalon Ballroom. After all, he can still describe, in detail, the Hendrix, Steppenwolf, Santana, and Jefferson Airplane posters that covered his bedroom walls when he was in junior high. But... no. "It comes from my mother. To this day, my mother has a room full of Beanie Babies and toys, and it looks like nothing's been touched—everything looks brand new," he says. "The reason I have all these things is because I actually dig 'em and care for 'em. But keepin' 'em? That came from my mother's gene pool."

It all started so innocently. Bobby chose his first real bass, a \$175 Gibson EB-1, over a paisley late-'60s Telecaster Bass because Jack Bruce, Rushton Moreve of Steppenwolf, and Rod Ellicot with Cold Blood all had EB-3's and Felix Pappalardi from Mountain had an EB-1; the EB's were smaller, and they made the players look bigger. A couple years later, at 15, Bobby quit school to start working at Don Wehr's Music City

in San Francisco, and he traded the Gibson (and some cash) for his first Jazz Bass, a blonde '71 with a maple neck and black blocks, "because Larry Graham had one." Before long, his friend Billy Stapleton began hippin' him to old guitars. It wasn't until he bought his first P-Bass, a black '71, and then sold both Fenders, however, that a light bulb went on.

"Working at a music store, I realized that that's how they stayed in business: People bought stuff, and then they would trade it in and they get something else," Bobby says. "I should've kept those basses, and after I got rid of them, I realized that if I bought something because it sounded great and I dug it, then even if my ears changed, I should keep 'em. It was hard for me to sell any other basses after that." All these years later, Bobby can tell you every instrument he's ever bought or sold, and for someone who's bought as much gear as he has, the "ones that got away" list is impressively short—which is great news for us, and for you.

Over the next few issues, Bobby will walk us through his Bassment, sharing tall tales and great photos of instruments like the '65 Jazz Bass with a paint job by Art Himsel, the Azola Baby Bass formerly owned by Alphonso Johnson, the stock 1960 Jazz Bass that was a gift, the Ernie Ball Earthwood ABG whose former owner can't be named, the 1964 reverse T-Bird for which he traded a Jazz Bass, his '61 and '64 Ampeg B-15 combos, his fretless late-'60s AMUB-1, his MXR M113 Digital Delay (complete with four memory cards), and, of course, the infamous Shark Bass autographed by Milton Berle and outfitted with the bridge that would later become the Badass Bass Bridge II. Sex, drugs, gear, rock & roll—it's all there, and it'll all be here. Seeya in the Bassment! —E.E. BRADMAN

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